

30p

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ONE OF OUR MONARCHS IS MISSING
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Hezbollah was hiding behind UN base in which refugees were killed, says Peres

Shelling goes on despite death of 94

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN BEIRUT

SHIMON Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, last night made clear that Operation Grapes of Wrath, the bombardment of Lebanon, would continue unabated despite the killing of 94 Lebanese civilians sheltering in a United Nations base near Tyre.

"What our forces did was reply to the source of fire," he told a press conference. "The Hezbollah is traditionally trying to look for a shelter behind the lives of the civilian people, they hid themselves behind the civilians."

Gunmen kill 18 tourists in Egypt

Gunmen shouting "God is great" killed 17 Greek tourists on an Easter pilgrimage and an Egyptian in a machinegun attack at the Europa Hotel in Cairo yesterday. Another 15 of the pilgrims were injured when the four gunmen opened fire. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but suspicion fell on Islamic militants. — Page 12

Windows of the other were destroyed, leaving the floor strewn with the bodies of the dead and wounded.

"We're under fire," a radio operator at the Fijian-manned base near Tyre in southern Lebanon said, his voice choking. "Shells are landing on headquarters. People are dying here."

"My white rubber shoes have turned red from the blood," said Hassan Seklawi, a Lebanese who works as a liaison officer for the UN force. "I had to walk over bodies that covered the walkways at the base," he said.

A mother and her six children were also reported to have been killed during an attack on the Muslim Shia village of Nabatiyyat in southern Lebanon.

The Clinton Administration last night urged all parties to show restraint but it refused to condemn Israel's action. "Fundamentally the problem is created by Kayusha attacks into northern Israel," said Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State. They had created a "very dangerous situation" and "the parties ought to recognise that the way to resolve this problem is for those Kayusha attacks to be stopped."

Diplomatic sources said that Dennis Ross, the State Department's senior official involved in the Middle East, was en route to the region to try to broker a ceasefire.

Uri Dromi, the Israeli Government's chief spokesman said: "All of us regret this tragedy, but one thing has to be made perfectly clear. We do not target civilians and we do not target UN camps and positions."

Israeli commentators said that the disaster had posed major problems for Mr Peres, whose chances of winning the Israeli election on May 29 had been boosted by the earlier attacks on Lebanon.

The UN in New York confirmed that Hezbollah guerrillas had fired a volley of missiles and mortars from a position near its Fijian base 15 minutes before the Israeli attack. Sylvana Foa, the chief UN spokeswoman, said: "We were not aware there was a



A Lebanese boy is trapped in his house bombed in yesterday's attacks. A woman and eight children were killed

Hezbollah position 300 yards away."

The Israeli Defence Forces knew the precise position of all UN contingents in southern Lebanon, she said. Previous Israeli shelling near the base had been described by the Israelis as "accidental" and attributed to "equipment failure."

Expressing "shock and horror" at the attack, Boutros Boutros Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, sent his top military adviser, Major-General Frank van Kappen, from New York to southern Lebanon to conduct an investigation.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said he was "gravely concerned" about the shelling. "The latest incident demonstrates the urgent need for violence in the region to be brought to an end," he said in a statement.

Just hours before the shells hit the UN post, a Lebanese mother and her seven children, one a four-day-old girl, were killed when Israeli warplanes rocketed their home.

Two teenage relatives of the family died in the same attack. Most of the casualties that flooded into Tyre's chaotic hospitals after the Israeli attack were women and children. Grief-stricken survivors picked through the rubble

searching for loved ones while UN peacekeepers wept. Lebanon was gripped by a deep sense of revulsion and outrage.

The Government issued a warning that the Israeli attacks were serving only to galvanise support for the radical pro-Iranian movement which vowed to avenge the deaths. It fired rockets across the border within hours of the attack on the UN base and a spokesman said its "suicide brigades" were ready in southern Lebanon to "shake the earth under the feet of the criminal Zionists".

Iran threatened, page 12

But the policy will stress the point made consistently by Tony Blair and Mr Brown that savings must first be identified to finance new spending commitments. It also suggests that the party leadership accepts that it must show that recent overtures towards the middle classes does not mean it is putting aside its responsibilities to lower income families. The plan will almost certainly figure in Labour's election manifesto.

Mr Brown will underline that Labour's commitment to keeping child benefit universally paid to mothers remains, and that the party is still considering whether it should

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Budget tax cuts are hit by £3bn setback

By Philip Webster and Janet Bush

KENNETH CLARKE yesterday tried to dampen expectations of a pre-election tax giveaway as government borrowing overshoot official forecasts by more than £3 billion.

As the Tory Right intensified its calls for substantial tax cuts to rescue the party from electoral defeat, the Chancellor echoed John Major's caution. A day after the Prime Minister told colleagues hefty cuts would be "reckless and silly", Mr Clarke told MPs it would be wholly wrong to attempt "to buy the next election by irresponsible tax cuts".

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, added later that Mr Clarke would reduce taxes "when it can prudently be done".

While all MPs think the Government will make some tax cuts in November, a concerted attempt is under way to depress expectations, mainly because figures released yesterday suggest any scope will be severely limited. Some experts even say there is no case for any autumn cuts.

Mr Major has been making clear for some time that a last-minute giveaway would not convince voters and could damage the economy.

Yesterday's borrowing figures even prompted some economists to argue that the package of tax cuts announced last November, and implemented on page 2, col 8

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Portillo apology to dead girl's parents

By Michael Horsnell

MICHAEL PORTILLO, the Defence Secretary, has written a private letter of condolence to the parents of Louise Jensen, the Danish tour guide, expressing the shame felt by the Army at her killing by three drunken British soldiers in Cyprus.

Ministry sources also indicated yesterday that any claim for compensation by the couple for her death should be directed through the British Ambassador in Copenhagen.

The developments are expected to satisfy the wishes of Poul and Anette Jensen who protested through *The Times* that they had received neither apology nor an offer of compensation since the three Royal Green Jackets were sentenced to life imprisonment three weeks ago.

Through an intermediary, Morten Larsen, they had protested to the Prime Minister about the official silence after the convictions.

In a separate move, Nicholas Soames, the armed forces minister, has written to *The Times* saying: "We all share in the agony which will be felt by Miss Jensen's parents."

He adds: "I offer to Miss Jensen's grieving parents, family and friends, on behalf of the Government and all British forces, my heartfelt sympathy and regret." The Army would not tolerate "anything less than the highest possible standards of behaviour".

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Dim prospects for babies who suck dummies

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

BABIES given dummies grow up dumber than average, a new study has shown.

Researchers from Southampton University stumbled on the link when trying to establish whether breast-feeding affects intelligence. They could find no such link, but were startled to discover that of all the factors that may be linked to a child's intelligence, the use of dummies was the strongest.

There are many possible reasons.

One is that dummies pacify infants so successfully that they become less receptive to outside stimuli. Another is that parents whose babies use dummies do not interact sufficiently with them. Or it may simply be that dummies are used by less intelligent parents who, on average, will have less intelligent children.

The research involved testing the IQ of nearly 1,000 men and women born in Hertfordshire between 1920 and 1930. An unusually diligent team of health visitors kept exhaustive records of these babies. Catherine Gale and Christopher Martyn, from the Medi-

cal Research Council's Environmental Epidemiology Unit at Southampton, report in *The Lancet* that they compared the IQ of the adults with details about their treatment as infants.

In the test subjects were given marks out of 50. The participants scored an average of about 22 or 23, but those who had sucked dummies scored an average 3.5 points less.

"Babies who had dummies were more likely to come from lower social classes and larger families, but even when these factors were screened out dummy use was still a very strong predictor," Ms Gale said.

Earlier studies suggested that breast-feeding did have an effect on IQ. In the Hertfordshire group, those who had been breast-fed showed a slightly higher IQ — 22.3, on average, compared with 21.5 — but when the results were corrected for other variables, the link disappeared.

In a commentary in the same journal, William and Mark Feldman, of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, say: "The best evidence is that intelligent, loving and caring mothers are more likely to have intelligent children, irrespective of how they feed their babies."

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Heseltine — a model mayor for London

Turn again, Heseltine, Thou worthy citizen, Lord Mayor of London.

MICHAEL HESELTINE told MPs yesterday that, if invited to serve as elected Mayor of London, he was ready to answer the call.

The extraordinary announcement appears to have been made off the cuff and without Cabinet consultation — but that's what you risk when you let the PM slip away to the Ukraine. In Mr Major's place at Prime Minister's Questions sat his stand-in, Mr Heseltine. Opposite sat Labour's own second-in-command, John Prescott.

The ash-blond Deputy Prime Minister had swept in

minutes earlier buoyed by his description in a new Conservative propaganda sheet, *Look!*, a sort of Tory *Pravda* clutched in the sweaty palms of half the government benches yesterday. In its fashion centre-pages (*It's hats off to British fashion!*) *Look!* had described Heseltine as the "guiding light" in the re-emergence of the industry.

Whether it was as exemplar, fashion model or political beacon that Heseltine is proving such an inspiration on the catwalks of Britain was unclear but, with only the disco music missing, our ministerial supermodel stalked to his place, executed a half-turn and reclined on the bench, looking too sexy for his



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

shirt, and ready for anything.

Eat your heart out, John Prescott. This was Tony Blair's deputy's first chance to demonstrate his middle-class credentials in the Chamber. He started well. "Remember that shrewd analysis in 1990..." Prescott began.

"Shrewd analysis" indeed! This was definitely lounge bar stuff. Not for the public bar or darts board was a phrase like "shrewd analysis". You cannot imagine John Prescott, the former seaman's union shop steward, mounting the dock-

side crate to declare: "Here, brothers, is my shrewd analysis of the scabs' betrayal."

So far so good, but he spoilt it. So carried away was Prescott by shrewd analysis that after a few seconds he began to shout (to cheers): "Dump Major!" Perhaps aware that he had compromised his middle-classness, Prescott overcompensated wildly, prattling excitedly about an editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* — "the middle-class bible", he explained.

Sorry, but you cannot pro-

ceed straight from the *Daily Mirror* to *The Daily Telegraph* without passing through the *Daily Mail* on the way. A decent pause with a middle-market tabloid might lend credibility to Mr Prescott's upwardly mobile route map.

Meanwhile, what of Michael Heseltine, a man whose own class pretensions Alan Clark has lampooned with the observation that he looks like the kind of man who buys his own furniture? Everybody knows Mr Heseltine wanted to be Prime Minister, and tried hard for the job. Twice at least he thought he had it in his grasp. Twice he failed. Like Dick Whittington and his cat he has seemed of late to be

plodding towards the horizon, knapsack over shoulder, defeated.

But, said Labour's David Jamieson (Plymouth, Devonport) yesterday, Heseltine loved inventing new titles. So what did he think of the title of Mayor — elected — of London?

To MPs' astonishment the Deputy Prime Minister took this as an offer. "I'd have to consider it," he said, thoughtfully.

President of the Board of Trade, Deputy Prime Minister, supermodel, and now Lord Mayor of London? Turn again, Heseltine. All he needs now is a spotted handkerchief and Humphrey, the Downing Street cat.

Blunkett pledges to scrap Tories' nursery vouchers

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

LABOUR is promising to scrap the nursery voucher scheme if it wins the next election. But vouchers already issued to four-year-olds will be honoured.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, told a news conference in London yesterday that Labour would expect to give all four-year-olds an entitlement to free nursery education within 18 months of coming to power. The £185 million new money earmarked for vouchers would fund the necessary expansion.

Under Labour's scheme, local authorities would buy some places in private nurseries and voluntary playgroups. But the timing of a new government guarantee for

four-year-olds would depend on the demand for places and number of vouchers redeemed outside the state system.

Mr Blunkett would not be drawn on how long it would take to fulfil his more ambitious promise of nursery education for all three-year-olds. Labour would draw up targets once in office, but these would depend on the time required to train the nursery teachers and other staff.

Opposition parties have attacked the bureaucracy of the Government's voucher scheme, which was launched this week in Norfolk and three London boroughs. Some £20 million of the new money will go on administration and inspection.

Most of the £565 million

needed to fund vouchers when the scheme goes nationwide next year is being clawed back from local authority budgets allocated for preschool education. The authorities will only get the money back when parents prefer their nurseries to private or voluntary provision.

Mr Blunkett said local authorities were expected to foot the bill for a wasteful and unnecessarily complex system. "This will have a devastating impact on current provision, with experienced teachers being laid off."

Robin Squire, the Schools Minister, accused Labour of misleading parents over the voucher scheme and of having no fully costed plans. "Labour is frightened of giving parents the power to choose what is best for their children."

The Pre-School Learning Alliance, which represents thousands of voluntary playgroups, also attacked Labour's plans. Margaret Lochrie, the chief executive, said vouchers were not ideal but did provide urgently-needed financial help for those not served by local authorities.

Mrs Lochrie said: "There is a paradox at the heart of Labour's nursery campaign. On the one hand, Labour pledges its commitment to work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other providers. However, at the same time, there is a clear inference that provision that does not take place in schools is of low quality."

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Child benefit plan

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be taxed for higher rate taxpayers.

Child benefit is paid to eligible children aged 16 and over if they stay on at school. However, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has reported that 80 per cent of children with unskilled parents leave school at 16.

Mr Blair and Mr Brown have told colleagues that they must face the tough choices now rather than wait till they get into Government. Mr Blair heralded the move at this week's Shadow Cabinet, when he told colleagues that if they

lost the education battle they would also lose the economic one.

Mr Brown will make his announcement when he delivers the John Smith memorial lecture at Edinburgh University. It will be the first of a series of speeches by him and Mr Blair over the next ten days in which they will stress that Labour's plans to tackle economic failure and insecurity requires an active government to help people cope with change.



The unusual photograph taken on the Isle of Wight by Charles Knight

Rare royal smile sells for £140

A RARE photograph showing Queen Victoria smiling was sold for £140 at auction yesterday.

Charles Knight managed to record the happy moment during Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. She was visiting Newport on the Isle of Wight

where Knight had a photographic business.

Originally the picture also showed the Queen's daughter Princess Beatrice and her son-in-law, the Grand Duke of Hesse. It was cropped and sold as a postcard. The copy sold yesterday at Ewbank's in

Send, Surrey, was an original kept by Knight and handed down through his family. It was bought by a private collector.

In New York yesterday a signed photo of Victoria and Prince Albert thought to date from 1861 fetched £1,675.

Judge 'reluctantly' denies housing for asylum seekers

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

ASYLUM seekers were dealt a fresh blow yesterday by a High Court ruling that they cannot claim council housing while waiting to hear if they are granted refugee status.

But, in a highly unusual move, Mr Justice Poplewell admitted he made his ruling — which affects up to 30,000 people a year now stripped of welfare benefits under the Government's crackdown — with "reluctance" and "some considerable

doubt". The judge said he had asked Sir Thomas Bingham, the Master of the Rolls and head of the Court of Appeal civil division, for an appeal to be heard as a matter of urgency.

The ruling was immediately condemned by refugee charities, who said people fleeing from persecution would have to choose between returning to the country where their lives are in danger — "or staying in the UK as beggars of the worst kind".

The judge ruled that four friendless and penniless refugees, deprived of emergency welfare help under social

security regulations designed to curb bogus asylum claims, were not entitled to housing as "vulnerable" people under the 1985 Housing Act.

Asylum seekers were now being left on the streets "with nowhere to go and nothing to obtain food or nourishment", he said. The judge added he had been told: "They cannot get blankets or anything to keep themselves warm. They simply have the clothes they arrived in, and that is the extent of their belongings."

The judge said the four applicants for judicial review had argued that their destitute position amounted to a "special reason" why they should be helped. But he declared that it could not, under housing law, amount to a special reason, as this category only covered victims of floods, fire or some other similar emergency.

The four applicants were Joseph Kihara, a Kenyan said to have fled to the UK in February after being tortured; Lidya Araya, an Ethiopian who also arrived in February; Dragomir Pavlov, a Bulgarian who arrived in March, and Telekeja Ilunga-Ilunga, who fled from Zaire.

Regulations introduced in February by Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, ban people who fail to apply for asylum immediately on arrival in Britain from receiving income support, housing benefit or from enjoying any part of the welfare "safety net". They are also prevented from working for six months.

Pending their appeal against the ruling, the four legally-aided applicants will be temporarily housed by the authorities which refused them accommodation and opposed their application for judicial review.

Prison criticised over suicide wife

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A SUICIDAL woman killed herself within two hours of being admitted to Holloway Prison because staff were negligent and left her alone, an inquest jury decided yesterday.

Claire Bosley, remanded in custody last November for killing her husband, stuffed paper tissues down her throat and choked. She had made at least three attempts to kill herself while being held by police. The prison was given a written warning that she should be supervised.

But during a three-day inquest at the City of London Coroner's Court a jury was told that the warning was virtually ignored. Mrs Bosley, 34, was left in a holding area where a two-way mirror had been fitted back to front by mistake so she could not be watched.

Prison officers also failed to monitor closed-circuit television cameras and there was no videotape inside them. Mrs Bosley lay dead in a lavatory cubicle for up to an hour.

Yesterday, after the jury returned the unusual verdict of "suicide contributed to by neglect", Paul Matthews, the Deputy Coroner, said: "Action

should be taken to prevent this sort of thing happening again. This was a sad and tragic case." He would have reported the findings to the authorities but the prison's deputy governor was in court.

During the inquest Pauline Martindale, a senior prison officer specialising in dealing with potential suicides, admitted that she had read quickly a police form warning that Mrs Bosley was a suicide risk, but had missed the words "required constant supervision" at the bottom.

Many prisoners arrived with the form and proved to be all right, she said. Her assessment was that Mrs Bosley was not a major risk.

A Prison Service spokesman said the death was regretted. Investigations were started immediately and many recommendations were being implemented. These included changes to the reception procedures and others requiring longer-term actions.

Mike Ainsworth, deputy governor of Holloway, said no disciplinary action had been taken, but he would now consider whether Miss Martindale would remain a suicide awareness trainer.

Navy show sinks to four warships

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NAVY DAY at Portsmouth will be a pale shadow of its former self this year with only four frontline warships on show for the public and not an aircraft carrier in sight.

The size of the mini-fleet has so shocked the local council that the chairman of the Portsmouth Leisure Committee called yesterday for the event to be scrapped rather than sink into oblivion.

Mavis Southwell said she was astonished when it was announced that only four warships could make it for Navy Day which will run from May 25-27. "It is like an old actor or actress taking cheap little parts just to keep going, it is far better to go when you are at the height of your glory than carry on like that," she said.

The number of ships available has been cut back in recent years but this is thought to be the smallest offering since the annual event began more than a century ago. A decade ago, more than 100,000 people turned out to go aboard 19 warships.

The four main warships on show will be two Type 23 frigates, HMS Westminister and HMS Richmond, and the

Lack of winter rain hits water supplies

Water companies warned yesterday that water shortages were likely this summer because of the lack of winter rainfall. The warning came after Lord Crichton, the former chairman of the National Rivers Authority, advised consumers to start economising on water now or face shortages. He said it would be "extraordinary foolishness" to express confidence about the water situation this summer.

Reservoirs were very low and any attempt to stop water leakage would not be effective in the time available, he said. "There is therefore a real need... to attempt saving and to be economical with water because the only alternative is to take water from the rivers — with real environmental damage resulting." The Water Services Association, which represents the ten major water companies, said the unusually dry winter weather was giving cause for concern. A spokeswoman said: "We really do need substantial rainfall to make up the deficit, especially in the north and north-west regions. Manchester, for example, has been drier over the last few months than Madrid or Majorca."

Solicitors lose contract

Solicitors representing 965 people claiming to suffer from Gulf War syndrome learnt yesterday that the contract to lead the compensation case against the Ministry of Defence will go to another firm. Dorn & Co of Manchester has been involved in the legal battle for compensation for Gulf War veterans since 1991 but last year the contract was put out for tender by the Legal Aid Board and in August 1995 was awarded to Dawbarns of King's Lynn, Norfolk. A re-examination of the two tenders has upheld the decision.

Tanker inquiry refused

The Government has refused to hold a public inquiry into the Sea Empress oil tanker accident off Milford Haven in February despite requests from 74 organisations. In a Commons reply, Steven Norris, a transport minister, told the Plaid Cymru MP Cynog Dafis: "We believe that the investigation by the Marine Accident Investigation Board into the grounding and the subsequent salvage operations is the most effective and rapid means of determining the facts and any lessons which need to be learnt."

Second murder arrest

A second man has been arrested in connection with the murder in Leeds of Stevan Popovic, 74, a former Yugoslav resistance fighter. Leeds magistrates were told yesterday, Clive Jones, 25, of Gipton, Leeds, who denies murder, was appearing in court for the second time when his solicitor gave news of the development. Police later confirmed that a number of people were being questioned about Mr Popovic's murder, but that no one else had been charged. The hearing was adjourned.

Student drugs concern

Seven out of ten colleges responding to a survey by the Further Education Development Agency reported drug-related incidents over the past year. More than a third considered drug-taking among students to be a serious problem, although they said that alcohol was causing greater concern. The survey, answered by more than half of the 450 colleges, showed that 75 per cent of agricultural colleges had experienced incidents attributable to drugs.

Paternal blues

Postnatal depression affects men as well as women and treatment should be considered for both sexes, Dr Malcolm George, a neuroscientist at Queen Mary and Westfield College, London, said yesterday. Studies show that as many as one in ten fathers may be affected. However, the cause of the depression is different. In women it is known to be linked to hormonal changes after birth. Men may then "catch" the depression from their partners.

Operations cancelled

The number of hospital operations cancelled at the last minute has risen to 52,000, according to a parliamentary answer obtained by Labour. The total for the first three quarters of 1995-96, has outstripped that for the whole of 1994-95, when 48,000 operations were cancelled. The rise was highest in the third quarter, up by 22 per cent nationally compared with the same period a year earlier. In the South Thames region the rise was 90 per cent.

Animals stop the post

Royal Mail postmen and women were attacked 5,891 times by animals last year, with about 99 per cent carried out by dogs, the Government has disclosed. The injuries resulted in the loss of 4,817 working days. There were also 843 attacks by animals on Parcelforce delivery staff, with a total of 63 working days lost. Philip Oppenheim, the Junior Trade and Industry Minister, said in a Commons written reply.

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Tax setback

Continued from page 1

mented at the beginning of this month, were not justified. The Government borrowed £9.6 billion in March, taking the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement — the Budget deficit — to £32.2 billion for the whole financial year — £3.2 billion higher than the Chancellor forecast in the Budget.

His panel of independent forecasters recently expressed concern about calls for November tax cuts, three out of six members arguing that, if anything, the right policy would be to raise taxes.

Yesterday, the City joined the chorus of voices urging caution. Geoffrey Dicks, of NatWest Markets said: "With hindsight we can question the validity of the tax cuts that have just been implemented."

There was no shortage of culprits. Tax revenues were weaker than the Treasury had forecast. Corporation taxes were £1.25 billion below target, and there were shortfalls of £750 million each on income taxes and VAT receipts.

The Chancellor "received some good news with a cut in German interest rates. Separate encouraging figures yesterday showed British headline inflation unchanged at 2.7 per cent in March and underlying inflation steady at 2.9 per cent."

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THE TIMES
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Black teenager 'murdered by race-hate gang'

BY RICHARD DUCE

A TEENAGER was stabbed to death by a gang of white youths simply because he was black, an Old Bailey jury was told yesterday. Stephen Lawrence, 18, was surrounded by up to six attackers as he waited for a bus to take him home in southeast London almost three years ago.

Michael Mansfield, QC, for the prosecution, said: "There can be no mistaking that this was an unprovoked, unwarranted attack by those who held not just racist views but racist views that involved the desecration of those who are black by injury and possibly death."

He told the jury: "There was no other reason for this attack, which was swift and merciless and vicious. The assailants disappeared into the night. The reason he was set upon by this group was because of his skin — he was black."

"Stephen struggled a few yards up the road, collapsed and was dead within half an hour. This was a group attack — they approached together, attacked together and disappeared together."

Stephen died to death after he was stabbed twice near the bus stop in Eltham on the night of April 22, 1993.

Mr Mansfield was opening the prosecution of three youths accused of 18-year-old Ste-



Stephen Lawrence: died after bus-stop stabbing

phen's killing in Eltham, southeast London. Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen, who were in court yesterday, brought a private prosecution against them. It is only the fourth such prosecution of its kind in the past 130 years.

Neil Acourt, 20, and Luke Knight, 19, both from Eltham, and Gary Dobson, 20, from Bromley, Kent, deny murder. Stephen was attacked while with his friend Dwayne Brooks, who managed to escape. "One got away and lives to tell the tale, but the other didn't," Mr Mansfield said.

He told the all-white jury of seven men and five women: "Stephen Lawrence was at Bluecoat School in southeast London doing what many ordinary young people do, just going to school and continuing his studies. What he didn't know was that it was going to be his last day at school."

Mr Mansfield described how the two friends went to see one of Stephen's relatives after school. At about 10pm they caught a bus towards their homes and then got off to wait for another to complete the journey. Mr Brooks, 21, told the jury he then walked down the road because no bus appeared to be coming. Stephen followed behind and then moved in front of him.

He said there was a gang of white youths on the opposite side of the road and one of them shouted: "What, what nigger?"

The youths then ran across the road and surrounded Stephen. His friend described how Stephen appeared to be stabbed once before falling to the ground. "Blood was running out on the floor," Mr Brooks said.

Stephen then managed to run some 130 yards before he collapsed in the street and Mr Brooks called an ambulance. Stephen was certified dead at hospital.

Earlier Mr Mansfield showed the jury a kitchen



Neville and Doreen Lawrence arriving yesterday for the case against three youths accused of their son's murder

knife with an Sin blade that was found in a street near by. He said it could not be proved to be the murder weapon, but was similar to the knife used to inflict the 4in deep stab wounds that Stephen suffered.

Alexandra Marie, a witness, said she was at the bus stop and saw the two boys talking. "They seemed cheerful. One of them was trying to practise a few steps of dance — discreet-

ly, not to show off," she said. "There were some other young people who arrived — they were white."

She heard a noise and saw one of the 'coloured men' on the ground and then white ones who were hitting him and leaning over him. She added that Stephen's friend had run up and shouted: "Run, Steve, run." Stephen had got up and crossed the

road. "He had tried to protect himself. But not to fight or hit," she said.

Joseph Shepherd, who lived on the same estate as Stephen and knew him by sight, saw the attack. In a statement read out to the court by the prosecution, Mr Shepherd said he had watched the black boys as they walked along the road and encountered the group of white youths. "I heard the

white youths say something to Stephen Lawrence."

The black boys were about ten yards in front of the group when they turned round to face them, Mr Shepherd said. "Suddenly the youths charged at Stephen and his mate. They were shouting and cheering. They didn't stand a chance," he said.

The hearing continues on Monday.

School mourns love-rift teacher

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

PUPILS and staff at a comprehensive school yesterday mourned the apparent suicide of a geography tutor whose wife ran off with the music teacher.

Nigel Harper-Tarr, 44, was found dead in a fume-filled car on Sunday, two days before summer term began. Friends believe the father of four could not face seeing his wife, Pauline, with her new lover. All three taught at Magdalen College School in Brackley, Northamptonshire.

Mrs Harper-Tarr, a special needs teacher, began an affair with Steve Pogson, 43, the music teacher, on a school trip. She subsequently moved out of the family home.

Elaine Wotherspoon, the head teacher, refused to discuss the personal circumstances behind the tragedy, but issued a statement saying: "The governors, staff, students and parents have all been devastated by the tragic news. Such a popular and highly respected colleague will be sorely missed and our thoughts are with his family at this time."

Mrs Harper-Tarr declined to comment yesterday. She and Mr Pogson have been granted compassionate leave.

Mrs Wotherspoon broke the news to pupils at a special assembly on Tuesday. Parents were told by letter. An inquest was opened and adjourned by the Northamptonshire Coroner on Wednesday.

Student sues law firm for £2m over family will

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S biggest law firm is being sued by a student on legal aid for a larger share of a £50 million family will.

Dominic Trusted, 22, an Old Etonian, has filed a £2 million negligence claim against Clifford Chance, the second largest law firm in the world.

He claims the firm was negligent in failing to finalise the revised will of his great-uncle Eric Hopton before he died childless in January 1991 aged 72, ten months after a heart attack.

Mr Trusted received £50,000 under the terms of his great-uncle's will drawn up in 1984, with the balance of the estate after legacies going to Mr Hopton's nephews, Christopher and Nicholas Hopton.

Mr Trusted, of Belgrave, central London, claims that Clifford Chance and one of its partners, David Bowyer, were negligent.

Lawyers for Mr Trusted say the firm should have processed the new will more quickly. David Oliver, QC, for Mr Trusted, told Mr Justice Parker that a series of drafts of



Trusted: received only £50,000 from great-uncle

a new will were drawn up but were not executed when Mr Hopton died.

Mr Oliver said that after Mr Hopton's death, lengthy negotiations culminated in a deed of family arrangement in January 1993, under which Mr Trusted and his brother received substantial benefit. Mr Trusted is suing for the difference between what he received and what he would have received under the new will.

The court was told that Mr Bowyer went on a three-

month sabbatical from August to November 1990 and Mr Hopton was happy to leave the amendments until his return. Mr Bowyer gave emergency contact numbers and thought it wise that Mr Hopton should ponder the proposed changes for a few months.

By the autumn, it was clear that Mr Hopton's health was unlikely to improve and that another attack would be fatal, the court was told. By December, Mr Bowyer had begun "putting pen to paper" on the new will, and a second draft had been sent to Mr Hopton by Christmas. He was expected to go through the amendments when his client returned to London from Devon on January 5.

On January 2, Mr Bowyer was advised by Christopher Hopton not to send his great-uncle any letters that might worry him, but to wait for the meeting. But the next day Mr Hopton was admitted to hospital and died ten days later.

The firm and Mr Bowyer deny acting in breach of duty, and say the instructions they received were not sufficient to enable the will to be completed more quickly.

School takes pot luck in farm-goat swap

A SCHOOL struck a pot of gold when teachers swapped a goat for a vase made by a local potter. While the goat was valued at a few pounds when the deal was made in 1970, the vase is now valued at up to £30,000.

Writlington secondary school in Radstock, Somerset, plans to sell the pot by the internationally-renowned potter Hans Coper at Sotheby's on May 7 to raise money for a new sports hall.

His widow, Jane, 64, said

yesterday that she had asked the school for a kid from its farm after the couple moved into a derelict house at Frome. "Hans offered to pay for the goat, but the teacher in charge wouldn't accept any money for it. In the end, he just said: 'Oh, just give me a pot.' Of course, at the time he was not to know that a pot by Hans Coper was worth a lot more than a goat."

Simon Cottle, Sotheby's ceramics specialist, said: "The school got the bargain of a lifetime."

Old tortoise has a rude awakening

By OLIVER AUGUST
A 100-year-old tortoise has been stolen from a garden after waking from hibernation. Joey emerged from the greenhouse to enjoy the spring weather when he was unhooked from his lead, most likely to be sold on the black market.

Lynne Meadows, 46, Joey's owner, had only left him unattended for a few minutes at her home in Chalford, Gloucestershire. He had been in the family for 60 years. "I couldn't believe it when I saw the string and hook with no tortoise on the end," she said. "He's definitely been stolen because he could not have got off the hook on his own and the string is not broken."

Tortoises have become a popular target for thieves since an import ban was imposed in 1985. Prices have soared to £300 for each creature and zoos and pet shops have repeatedly been burgled. The RSPCA has devised security measures to combat tortoise theft, one of Britain's fastest-growing crimes. It advises owners that photographing their distinctive bellies, marking the shells in invisible ink and having microchips implanted in their legs to prove identity.

Tortoises, once common, are now rare in northern Europe. The ban was imposed after a public outcry over the way they were shipped to Britain in baskets.

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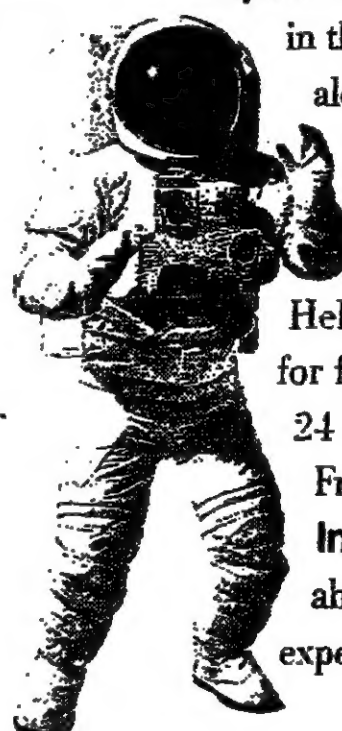
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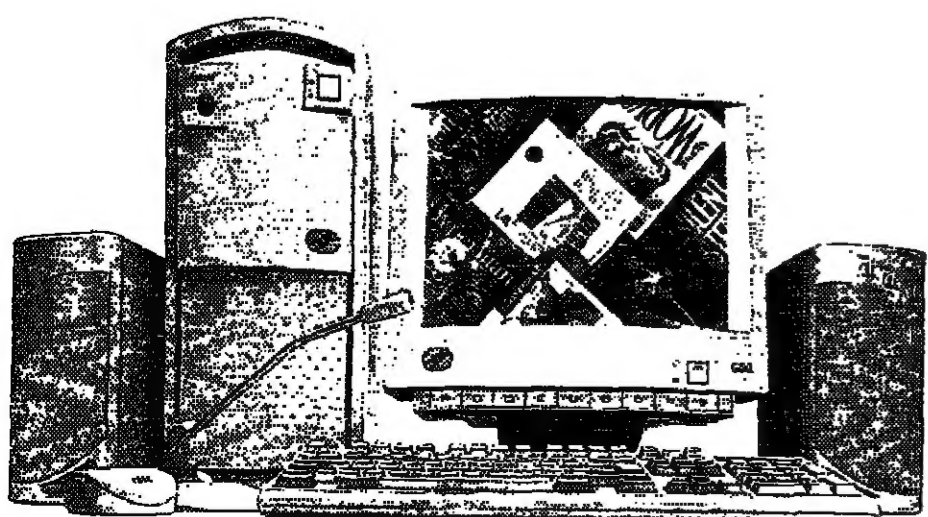
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البيان

Family stage Singapore hanging vigil for killer who dismembered his victims

BY ANDREW DRUMMOND AND JOANNA BALE

THE mother and sister of John Martin Scripps, the British serial killer who murdered tourists for their credit cards and cash, maintained a vigil outside a Singapore prison last night as he was due to be hanged at dawn.

Jean Scripps, from Sandown, Isle of Wight, and her daughter Janet, from Bengoe, Hertfordshire, said their final farewells to the 36-year-old murderer during a visit yesterday afternoon. They left, visibly distressed, after being told that they could return today to inspect his body.

Scripps, who chopped up his victims with a butcher's knife, was scheduled to be executed in Changi jail at 6am local time - 11pm in Britain. In a semi-literate scrawl on a scrap of paper, he wrote that he gave himself to a God who had betrayed him. He wrote: "You may take my life for what it is worth, but grant thows I love, peace and happiness."

In prison Scripps had also written an account of how he escaped his own hanging to fall into the arms of his mother and sister, but yesterday there appeared to be little chance of a reprieve.

As the two women left the prison after their final visit, they declined to say whether Scripps had at last admitted murdering the Briton Timothy MacDowall, who went missing in Central America after Scripps had milked his bank accounts in London. Scripps, a convicted drugs trafficker who has two uncles in jail for murder, was due to become the first Briton to be executed in Singapore since the country was given independence.

Before his death Scripps, whose only love outside his family was his Mexican ex-wife, Maria Arellanos, summed up his life in a misspelt epitaph: "One day poor. One day reach. Money fills the pane of hunger but what will fill the emptiness inside I know that love is beyond me. So do I give myself to god. The god that has betrad me. Can I be a person again? Only time will tell me."

Earlier he had requested 11 books to read before he died, including *War and Peace*, *Darkness at Noon* and *The Holy Sinner*.

Yesterday journalists were banned from the prison environs, including Changi Prison Museum, a popular tourist spot. The Singapore Government was not expected to make an announcement before 9am local time.

Before she left Britain, Mrs Scripps said: "These bastards have no right to take my son's life. I brought him into the world. I am the only person who can take him out of it."

Scripps was sentenced to death after being convicted of the murder of a South African, Gerard Lowe, in an hotel in Singapore in March last year. The court was told that Scripps, who learnt butchery while in Albany Prison on the Isle of Wight, chopped up Mr Lowe, a chemical engineer with South African Breweries, and placed the parts in black plastic rubbish bags which he threw into Singapore harbour. He was also named in



Maria Arellanos eloped with Scripps when 15

Thailand as the murderer of Sheila and Darin Damude, a Canadian woman and her son, whose bodies were found in woodland and at a quarry on the Thai holiday island of Phuket.

Like Gerard Lowe, their misfortune was to travel the same holiday route as Scripps, who posed as a bumbling tourist while secretly plotting their murders. Scotland Yard also believes that Scripps mur-

dered Timothy MacDowall, 28, a financial adviser from south London who disappeared while in holiday in Mexico and Belize. Papers found on Scripps when he was arrested showed that he had milked Mr MacDowall's bank account in London of £13,000.

Scripps has spent the past few months in jail writing letters and reading in his small cell, where the light was kept on 24 hours a day and his movements were monitored by camera.

He was born in Hertford on December 9, 1959. His father, Leonard, was a London lorry driver. He committed suicide when Scripps was eight years old and Scripps found the body.

His life of crime began as a teenager. He was convicted of theft, indecent assault, burglary and heroin trafficking and spent most of his life in jail or escaping from it.

While on holiday in Mexico he eloped with a 15-year-old Mexican girl, Maria Arellanos. They came to London and were married. She left him after he was jailed for a series of burglaries and later married a member of the Royal Protection Squad, PC Ken Coid. When this marriage also failed, she returned to Mexico City, where she is now living with a taxi driver.

Scripps absconded four times while on home leave from prison. In 1994 he was serving two six-year sentences in the Mount Prison, Hemei Hempstead, for heroin trafficking, when he was given leave to visit his mother and sister.

Mrs Scripps claims that she begged the authorities not to release him: "He had sold all his belongings in prison and I knew he was going to run." That did not stop her giving him £200 to embark on his murderous world tour.

In Mexico City, Ms Arellanos, 33, said: "John disappeared on several trips and went to the United States and South-East Asia. I knew something awful was happening, but I could not believe he had started killing people."



Jean Scripps said goodbye to her son in Changi jail. "They have no right to take his life," she said



John Scripps in prison. His family have been told they can inspect his body today

North West Water: an apology

A REPORT (November 13 last year) on Ofwat's investigation of North West Water and certain other water companies stated that Ian Byatt, the Director-General of Ofwat, had told the company that "one of the reasons for his investigation is sewage contamination to the water of 700,000 customers".

We now accept this was incorrect and there was no evidence of any sewage contamination affecting water supplies in the North West Water area. We apologise for any distress this statement caused to their customers.

A second report on the same date quoted Mr Byatt as saying that certain water companies were cheating their customers by charging them for sub-standard services and clean-up schemes which failed to materialise. In fact, Mr Byatt made no such accusation. We greatly regret any damage which may have been caused to North West Water's reputation by these statements and have agreed to make a substantial donation to their nominated charity, Water Aid, by way of apology.

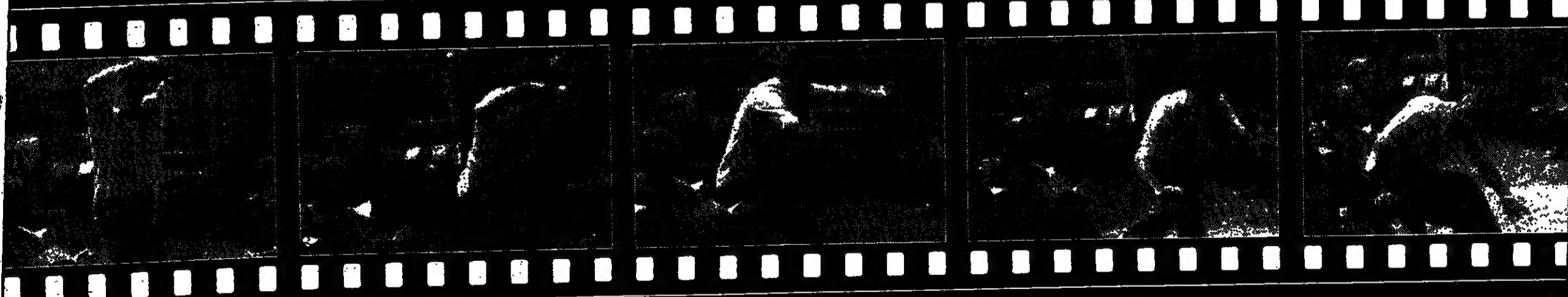
Trial delayed for 'husband' of girl, 13

THE trial of a Turkish waiter charged with raping the 13-year-old British girl he "married" in a religious ceremony not recognised by the state was adjourned yesterday to allow official papers on Sarah Cook to arrive from Britain.

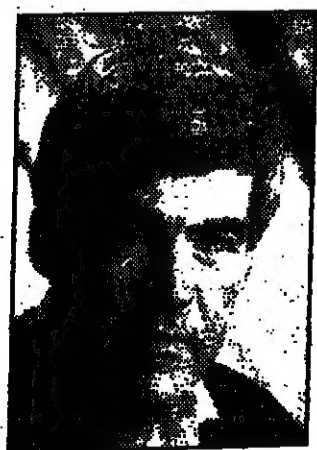
Musa Komegac, 18, told television cameras in broken English outside the court at Kahrmanmaraş: "Hello Sarah, how are you, my good? I love you, I miss you very much."

The trial will resume in June. In January the authorities learnt that the couple had taken part in an Islamic ceremony after meeting last summer in a southern Turkish resort. Sarah has been made a ward of a British court and returned home to Braintree, Essex, in February.

"Some people think I'm doing Charlie Chaplin impressions"



"I wish I was"



"I have Parkinson's Disease."

When I'm out walking, I see people staring at me and their comments can be very hurtful. It's a neurological illness that I suffer from, and the drugs that I take can cause violent and uncontrollable movements of my arms and legs.

At other times of the day I'll be completely rigid and not be able to speak or move my limbs for considerable periods of time. With Parkinson's, simple tasks like controlling a knife and fork, using the telephone and getting dressed are very difficult. And Parkinson's can be very painful too. It's a great relief to know that I've got the Parkinson's Disease Society to help me."

Mr R.A. of Kent

The Parkinson's Disease Society helps people with Parkinson's and their carers. The Society campaigns for improved services, and helps people living with the disease to find appropriate respite, residential or nursing home care. Its Welfare team provides practical advice on issues like financial assistance, insurance and employment. The Society also promotes the appointment of specially trained nurses to run clinics.

For someone with Parkinson's, the opportunity to talk to others with the disease and hear how they manage their lives can often be a considerable help. The Parkinson's Disease Society has a nationwide network of 230 branches which offer friendship and mutual support.

The Society also supports many research projects to improve treatment and find a cure.

If you have Parkinson's, or care for someone who has, and would like more information about the Society, (or if you'd just like to help with a donation), return the coupon or call our 24 hour answerphone line on 0800 378 378.

As the only charity working exclusively to help people living with Parkinson's Disease, the Society needs funds to continue this work.

Thank you.

Parkinson's Disease Society

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Saudi dissident can stay after Howard U-turn

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Masari, ordered out of Britain in a government move to protect arms sales to Saudi Arabia, was told yesterday that he could stay after all, for at least four years.

In an embarrassing climb-down, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, lifted the deportation threat and granted him exceptional leave to remain.

But Mr Howard, who last month was ordered by Judge Pearl, the Chief Immigration Adjudicator, to reconsider the case, has not taken a decision on Dr Masari's application for permanent asylum.

Home Office sources, who confirmed that the Saudi Government had been informed in advance of the Home Secretary's decision, described the outcome as a compromise.

Dr Masari, 47, who fled to Britain in April 1994, said that he intended to resume his fundamentalist campaign against the ruling Saudi Royal Family. "It's a great relief to

Saudi Arabia made only a brief comment on the Home Office decision yesterday. Ghazi al-Ghosaibi, the Ambassador, said in a four-line statement that Saudi Arabia could not interfere in British law, and that the decision was a matter for the British Government. His low-key approach, in contrast to his remarks to BBC's *Panorama* that a decision to allow Muhammad al-Masari to remain in Britain would harm British exports to Saudi Arabia, suggests that the Saudis are determined not to let the issue ruin their otherwise good relations with Britain.

me in the sense that the threat of deportation is off. What I have got is *de facto* asylum. Exceptional leave to remain is not quite as good as asylum but it's good enough."

The issue is a sensitive one for relations between the two

countries, with Britain seeking to protect companies with a stake in the £20 billion al-Yamamah arms deal and other substantial interests in Saudi Arabia.

The news of his victory was given to Dr Masari during a 25-minute interview with Jeremy Crump, an assistant director of the Immigration Service. He was told that it will be open to him to apply for further leave to remain at the end of the four years. Two daughters in Britain with him were also given leave to remain and other dependants, including his wife and younger children, are expected to join him.

Dr Masari will also be given travel documents by the Home Office — though not a British passport — to allow him to travel abroad as he wishes.

The Home Office said in a statement last night: "The Home Secretary reached this decision after consideration of the recommendation by the Chief Immigration Adjudicator and after having taken full

account of our international and domestic obligations."

Dr Masari said: "I am satisfied with what has happened. We shall continue with our campaign against the Saudi Government. The Saudis will be very upset. I don't think they will comprehend that this is not full asylum. I think there will be another wave of pressures but I think the British Government will put up with that."

In his ruling last month,

which led to Mr Howard's public statement, Judge Pearl said it appeared that an attempt had been made by the Home Secretary to circumvent the United Nations Convention on Refugees for "diplomatic and trade reasons".

The judge said that the Home Secretary had failed to establish that Dr Masari was due to be expelled — was a safe third country for the dissident to be sent to. The

dissident and six colleagues publicly established the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia in May 1993. Twelve months later he lost his job as a professor of physics and was held in detention where he was allegedly tortured for six months.

His lawyers have argued that the British Government wanted to expel him in order to maintain good relations with Saudi authorities and

that the Dominican Government agreed to accept him for its own economic benefit after being told by British diplomats that "one good turn deserves another". Since arriving in Britain on a Yemen Airways flight with a Yemeni passport, Dr Masari has waged a campaign against the Saudi Royal Family. His accusations of corruption and calls for a peaceful transition to Islamic rule infuriated Saudi authorities.



Dr Masari leaving yesterday's Immigration Service interview when he was told he could stay for four years

Children need more crunch for lunch

WEEKEND SHOPPING

AS CHILDREN return to school for the summer term, studies have shown that four out of ten eat no fresh fruit during the week and only two out of ten have fresh vegetables.

Anita Bean, consultant nutritionist to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau, says that a lunch box including fresh fruit and vegetables sets children on the path to a lifetime of healthy eating. She recommends grated carrot, tomatoes and iceberg lettuce to add crunch and colour to sandwiches.

Promotions include: Asda: Oranges 79p for seven. Gala apples 49p lb, red or white grapefruit 22p each. Budegins: New Covent Garden carrot and coriander soup 99p for 568ml, black seeded grapes 65p lb, vanilla ice-cream 99p for 2 litres. Co-op: Sun Valley fresh whole roast chicken £2.99 for 900g, fresh chicken breast fillets £3.99 for 560g, mushroom pies 99p for four, apple purée rice pudding 400g 69p. Harrods: Small avocados 60p for five, asparagus and mushroom soufflé £2 each, Banon goat's cheeses £4.50 each. Iceland: Economy lamb £4.49 for 1.9kg, chicken 1.4kg — 1.5kg £1.49, mushroom and garlic filled chicken breasts £1.49 for two, Birds Eye fish fingers £1.69 for 16, baby carrots 99p for 907g, garden peas £1.69 for 1.8kg. Marks & Spencer: Canneloni for two £2.49, tagliatelle for one £1.49, macaroni cheese twin pack £2, pesto sauce £1.39, Tuscan olive oil £3.29, mixed peppers £1.49 for three. Morrison: Cod steaks £4.38 kg, whole trout £2.84 kg, whole mackerel £1.96 kg, coley fillet £2.84 kg, Olivio reduced fat spread 99p for 500g. Safeway: New Zealand extra mature cheddar £2.19 lb, potato salad 39p 4lb, loose green peppers £1.09 lb, white potatoes £1.99 for 5kg, medium Galla melons £1.69 each, strawberries 99p for 454g. Sainsbury's: 12 fresh chicken drumsticks £2.69 for 1.2kg. West Country cheddar £4.59 kg, white potatoes 99p for 2.5kg, red plums 79p lb. Somerfield: Closed cup mushrooms 79p lb, broccoli 99p lb, mixed apples £1.29 for 12, asparagus £1.99 for 250g, strawberries 75p pack. Tesco: Quarter cut leg of pork £3.09 kg, broccoli 79p lb, asparagus £1.99 bundle, Jaffa oranges £1.19 for eight. Waitrose: Scotch roasting beef £2.49 lb, okra 69p for 125g, cucumbers 45p each, stringless beans 99p for 250g, Wilja potatoes 79p for 1.5kg, pure orange juice £1.59 for 2ltr.

ROBIN YOUNG

Lorry driver fears Brussels eyesight test will cost him his job



Hirst: must have a medical

BY JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A LORRY driver who has not had an accident in 30 years expects to be the first victim of European eyesight rules that could force up to 3,000 truckers to quit.

Bill Hirst, 60, fears he will lose his £16,000-a-year job delivering animal feed because of a minor defect in his right eye. He is due to sit a medical for a five-year extension to his heavy goods vehicle licence on

July 5, four days after the introduction of the test.

It requires lorry drivers to have adequate vision in both eyes without wearing glasses or contact lenses. The old rules required drivers to be able to see reasonably well out of one eye without correction. The regulations are aimed at ensuring that all lorry and bus drivers are capable of controlling their vehicles even if their glasses fall off.

Mr Hirst, of Leiston, Suffolk, who says the rule will cost him £70,000

in lost earnings, believes he will fail because he has a "lazy" right eye, although his left eye is good. "Up to now I have passed my eyesight test with flying colours, thanks to my good eye," he said. "I have already had a private eye test which proved I will fail the new HGV test because of my bad eye."

"In all my years of driving, my glasses have never fallen off my head. Thanks to this EC rule I am being thrown on the scrapheap five years early. Nobody has ever com-

plained about my driving and I consider myself very safe."

All European Union member states must meet the rules on July 1, but the Department of Transport has been attacked for applying them retrospectively rather than just to new applicants. This could mean that Continental drivers will be able to drive in this country, even though they would have been banned if they had been British.

Mr Hirst is being backed by his employers, the J. Bibby agricultural

feed factory in Framlingham, Suffolk. Boyd Barrington, its production manager, said: "We consider him a safe and professional driver. We are right behind him."

Mr Hirst's wife, Cynthia, 59, is also launching a campaign for compensation for drivers who face losing their licences under the legislation. Mr Hirst will receive no compensation because he is not being made redundant and may have to claim benefits for the first time in his life.

Viscount's farewell flight hits a snag

A VICKERS Viscount scheduled to make its final domestic passenger flight yesterday had to be replaced at the last moment after hitting a fence.

The plane was preparing to fly from Stansted to Heathrow where passengers were waiting to board the historic 45-minute flight but it suffered a 2ft gash in a wing while being towed. Another Viscount was flown to Heathrow so the flight could go ahead.

Passengers stranded at Stansted were taken to London by bus. Among the guests waiting to board the flight at Heathrow was Lord King of Warrnaby, president of British Airways.

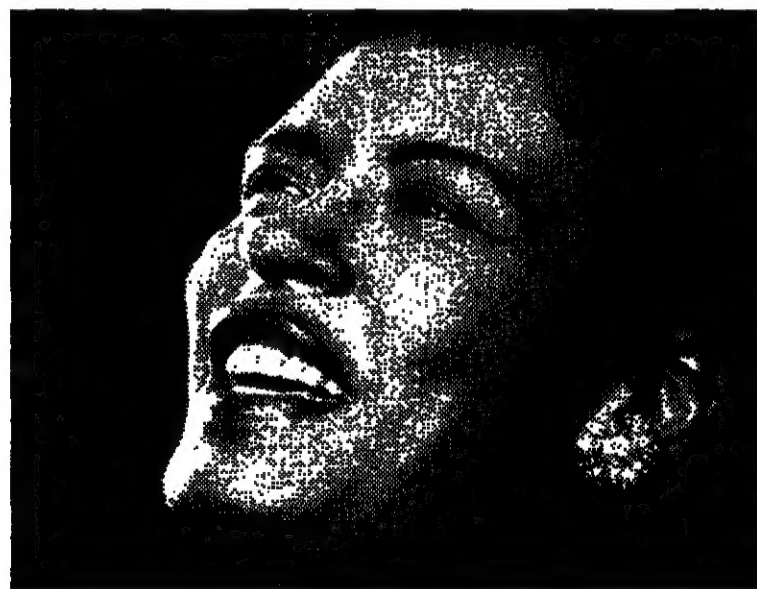
Colin Smale-Saunders, engineering director of British World Airlines, which oper-

ates the Viscounts, said: "This was very unfortunate but we are glad this historic flight was able to go ahead."

The Duke of Edinburgh was among many who paid tribute yesterday to the plane, which is ceasing passenger service after 43 years. He said: "It is sad news that the long and active commercial life of the Vickers Viscount has finally come to an end. I'm sure that many people who flew, or flew in, these aircraft will be pleased that it is being given a suitable farewell."

A total of 444 Viscounts were built and sold to more than 60 airlines. Five of those remaining will continue in service carrying parcels from Belfast and Edinburgh to Coventry.

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Cricketer supplied comedian's punchline

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A FAST bowler from Yorkshire did not appreciate the jokes a Lancashire comic was cracking about Leeds United, so he punched him.

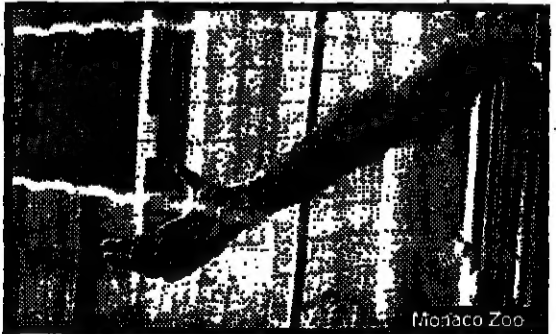
The comedian, however, had the last laugh. The unseemly scuffle during a cricket league awards dinner has earned Steven Morley a life ban from his club and all future league social functions, as well as a year's playing suspension and a league ban until 2000.

A disciplinary panel of the Huddersfield Central League found Mr Morley, from Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire, guilty of bringing the game into disrepute and of ungentlemanly conduct. Mr Morley, who had won two trophies for his performance last season with the St John's club in Cleckheaton, stormed the stage at his clubhouse after a series of wisecracks by Charlie Ale.

Bernard Green, the league secretary, said: "Charlie started having a go at Howard Wilkinson and Brian Deane, which I suppose was fair game. Everyone was enjoying themselves when suddenly Morley went off his head. He jumped on the stage and started trading punches with Mr Ale. It was disgraceful, right in front of our sponsors too."

Mr Ale said: "This one bloke was getting really upset and started heckling at me. Then he stood up on a table and started coming for me." Mr Morley was unavailable for comment yesterday.

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JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST SUFFERING IN ZOOS

Trawlermen's protest backed by former ministers

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE
CORRESPONDENT

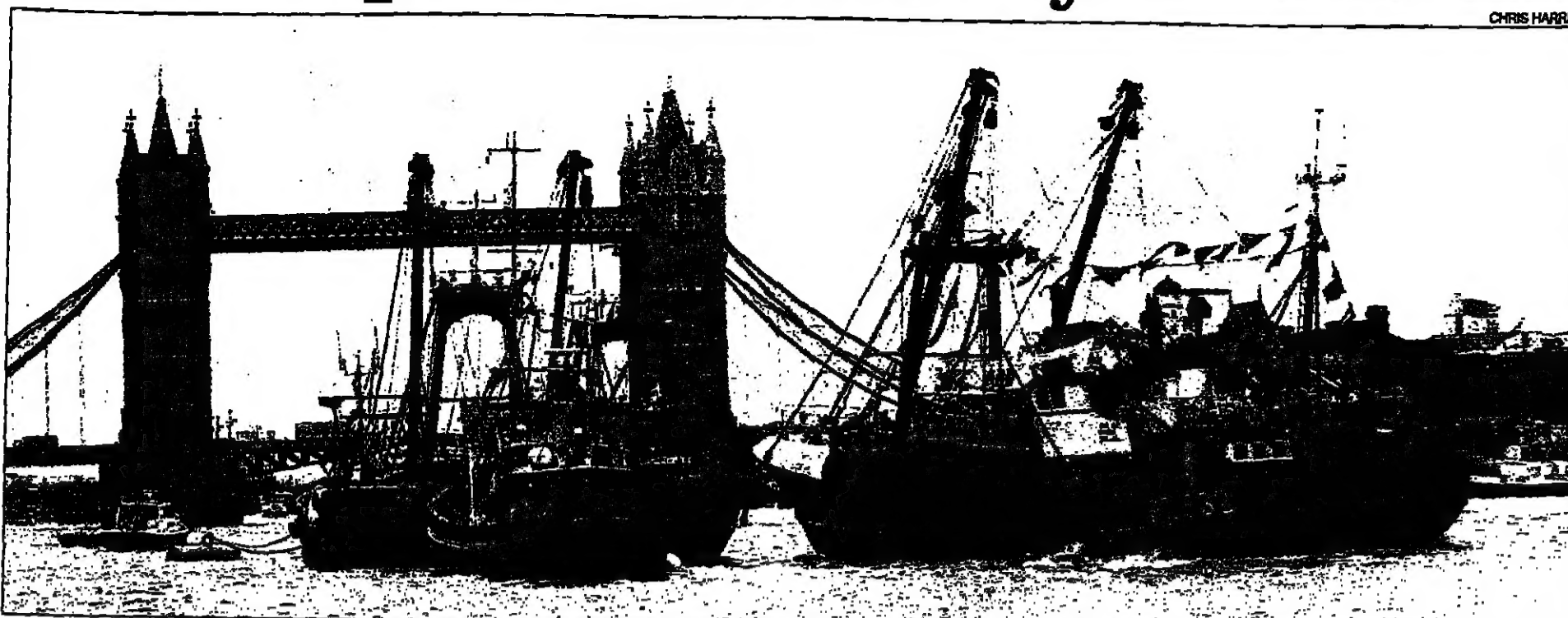
MORE than 2,000 angry trawlermen invaded the centre of London yesterday. They were joined by prominent Tory Euro-rebels in demanding withdrawal from the European Union's common fisheries policy.

John Redwood, the former Cabinet member who challenged John Major for the Tory leadership last year, drew thunderous applause at a rally in Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, as he called for fishing to be taken back under national control if Europe refused a better deal for Britain.

"Britain is a maritime nation," he said. "As an island people we are proud of the great past of our navy, merchant marine and fishing industry. It is time the Government stood up for all of them."

Earlier four beam trawlers from Cornwall and Devon marked the start of the protest by steaming up the Thames under Tower Bridge and anchoring opposite HMS Belfast. The boats sounded their horns as fishermen on the riverbank cheered.

One of the vessels, the *Carthage* from Brixham



Trawlers from the West Country making their way up the Thames yesterday to the Pool of London. Tower Bridge was raised to let them through

carried a banner saying: "Ted Heath conned us in 1972. Nothing has changed." A banner on the *Barents* read: "No mad fish at sea, just crazy politicians ashore."

Later four other big trawlers anchored in the Pool of London and a flotilla of smaller vessels sailed upstream to Westminster where a delegation met Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister.

Mr Redwood's plea was backed by Christopher Gill, the MP for Ludlow and one of

nine backbenchers who lost the Tory whip last year, and by Austin Mitchell, Labour MP for Great Grimsby.

Sitting in the body of the hall in a conspicuous show of solidarity with the rebellious trawlermen, were Norman

Lamont, the former Chancellor, and Bill Cash and Teresa Gorman, leading Tory backbench Euro-sceptics.

Mr Lamont told *The Times*: "We made a terrible mistake in agreeing to equal access to our waters for other EU boats."

almost as foolish as it would have been to treat North Sea oil as a common resource. In my view it is impossible to reform the common fisheries policy. We must withdraw from it."

In the Commons, Michael

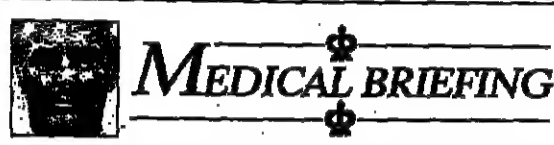
Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, told MPs that the Government was "listening extremely carefully" to what the trawlermen had to say and intended to seek reforms of fisheries policy at the EU inter-governmental confer-

ence. A handful of Scottish trawlermen were also present at the rally, but the protest was boycotted by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, which does not support withdrawal from the EU fisheries policy. Bob Allen, chief executive of the federation, said: "We do not see a realistic prospect that any British Government will leave the common fisheries policy, either unilaterally or by negotiation. We have to work for change from within."

Mr Mitchell said other EU member states would be powerless to stop Britain from opting out of the policy. His militant rhetoric failed to satisfy the trawlermen, however. He was drowned out by shouts of "we have had 25 years of bullshit" when he suggested that the Government should be given one more chance to negotiate a better deal.

Magnus Stewart, a Shetland skipper, told the gathering that the EU system of catch quotas, which forced trawlermen to throw good fish back dead into the sea, had turned him into a law-breaker for the first time in his life. "The common fisheries policy has turned me into a very bitter criminal, a liar, cheat and falsifier of documents to keep my business viable and give my crew a living wage."

How to tell a diabetic coma from death



Dr Thomas Stuttford

ANOTHER Lazarus story has made the headlines. Maureen Jones of Tawing, in Yorkshire, was raised from near-death by Police Constables Kevin Smith and Phillip Shrimpton. Mrs Jones, 59, was pronounced dead half an hour before the police reached her cottage and when they arrived a hearse was waiting to take the supposed corpse to the mortuary. Fortunately PC Smith noticed signs of life and he and PC Shrimpton gave her first aid until she could be taken to hospital.

Mrs Jones is diabetic, and diabetic patients are liable to go into coma if their glucose metabolism is upset by too much or too little insulin. There are two quite different types of coma which can affect diabetics, with different causes and therefore different treatments. Very often press reports of diabetic comas confuse the two sorts.

The most common type in diabetics is the hypoglycaemic coma in which the patient has had too much insulin. Sometimes this occurs if they have taken their usual dose but have not had regular meals. In a hypoglycaemic coma the blood-sugar level falls to the point at which the central nervous system is affected, the patient appears confused, aggressive and poorly co-ordinated, as if drunk. The patient is sweaty, dizzy and slides into unconsciousness.

In the early stages of the condition, when the patient can still swallow, sugary food or drinks, followed by a balanced meal, can be given. Once the swallow reflex has been blunted and the patient is lapsing into

unconsciousness, intravenous glucose or glucagon is needed. Glucagon injections, although not always effective, have an advantage in that they can be given by a family member.

The term diabetic coma is usually reserved for hyperglycaemic, in which the patient has been suffering for some time from too little insulin. They will have complained of listlessness, loss of weight and appetite and may well have felt nauseous and had abdominal pain. The patient will have been passing enormous quantities of urine so they are dehydrated, and they also smell of acetone.

Modern reagent strips which show the amount of sugar in a drop of blood make it easy to differentiate between the two types of coma, but even in the past it was not that difficult. The sister in the first ward on which I was a houseman taught me a trick. When an unconscious new arrival was known to be diabetic she would thrust her hand into his armpit: if it was sweaty he was hypoglycaemic; if the armpit was dry it was hyperglycaemia.

Deep coma can always be confused with death. Difficulties are usually associated when the coma follows a drug overdose or hypothermia. In some circumstances a pulse or heartbeat may be hard to feel.

Further evidence of death is achieved by studying the eyes. There is no blink reflex when the eye is touched and there are changes in the pupils, which dilate after death and do not react to light; all provide better confirmation than mirrors or feathers held in front of the mouth.



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Paradise lost for Bounty hunters

By CAROL MIDDLEY

BOUNTY, the coconut chocolate bar which used bikini-clad models to sell "a taste of paradise", is ditching its old-fashioned image for a new look.

The desert island fantasy scenes used for nearly 30 years in television advertisements are being replaced by a more "contemporary" image. From Monday viewers will see Bounty advertisements featuring a woman in an art gallery staring at a huge painting of a coconut comes to life in front of her. The bikini is replaced by a demure black dress and the slogan is "a taste of the exotic".

A spokeswoman for Mars, makers of Bounty, said that the desert island image had lost its mystique, while sandy white beaches were commonplace because many people now went to the Caribbean on holiday.

Amazon cave findings shed new light on American prehistory

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A STARTLING find in the Amazon jungle threatens to overturn existing theories about how the South American continent was peopled.

Dr Anna Roosevelt, of the Field Museum in Chicago, and colleagues have explored a cave at Monte Alegre, between Manaus and Belem on the north bank of the Amazon in Brazil, containing evidence that a thriving society existed there 11,000 years ago.

They lived on fruit, nuts, fish and small animals, made stone tools, and painted rocks. According to Dr Roosevelt, they may even have predated the Clovis people, long believed to have been the first American colonisers, whose earliest remains are much further north and date from 10,900 to 11,200 years ago.

"We found strong evidence that a culture quite distinct from the North American palaeo-Indian culture, but more or less contemporary with it, existed more than 5,000 miles south, in this

humid, tropical habitat," says Dr Roosevelt in today's issue of *Science*.

The team was led to the most intriguing of the caves, Caverna da Pedra Pintada, by a local schoolteacher. There they found sandstone walls covered with handprints in red and yellow, and paintings of human figures, animals, and geometric shapes.

In the floor of the cave they found evidence of fire, burnt food remains and stone tools. Radiocarbon dates put the age of the earliest settlement on the site to between 10,000 and 11,200 years ago. Two other dating methods agree, even suggesting a greater age of up to 16,000 years.

If that is accepted, it means that the Amazon culture was independent of the Clovis people, and not descended from it. It also means that the Amazon, long thought too hostile for early human occupation, was indeed the home of a human society which survived for a long time. That

in turn may mean that the "virgin" rainforests are the product of human ingenuity. The clustering of certain trees, such as cashews, brazil nuts and some palms, may be the result of prehistoric human activity and not chance.

Some archaeologists remain unconvinced that the Amazon people predate Clovis and that a date of 10,500 years ago is a more realistic interpretation of Dr Roosevelt's data. If so, the culture might have been formed by Clovis colonisers who entered North America across the Bering Strait and gradually worked south.

While Clovis people lived by slaughtering big game, the Amazon people were foragers, eating fruit, meat and shellfish common in the humid tropics. Much later, about 7,500 years ago, pottery began to be made. The caves themselves have been known for a long time, but nobody before Dr Roosevelt and her team had ever dug there to establish the earliest occupancy.



John Warlock, the icon of Seventies America, now lives in a converted bike shed. "I'm staying put," he said.

Theatre's fallen angel told to go to hell

By PAUL WILKINSON

THEATRE managers in York are taking legal action to evict a retired Hell's Angel who has been living in a bike shed next to their building for the past two years.

John Warlock has converted the lean-to beside York Theatre Royal into a home since staff allowed him to move in off the streets, but now the theatre says it needs the space as a store. A solicitor's letter telling him to quit the 5ft by 5ft shed by this week was ignored and now court action has been started. Even

though his hut has no electricity or water and he performs his ablutions elsewhere, Mr Warlock, 53, is prepared to fight the case. He said: "It is my home and I am staying put. Everyone watched me making the shed into my home and no one tried to stop me."

The face of Mr Warlock was an icon of Seventies America when a photograph of him and his motorcycle featured on a poster sold coast to coast. His life has since taken a downward turn and he ended up sleeping on the streets of York where he earns a living busking. His near-waist length beard,

and jeans held together with bar towels, made him a familiar figure in the city. When news of his impending eviction broke a phone-in poll voted 74 in favour of him staying on, much to the theatre's embarrassment. "We are being cast as villains which is not the case," said Pippa McPherson, marketing manager. "We allowed him to use this shed but we never thought he would be there two years later."

Julian Pheby, Mr Warlock's solicitor, said: "He is a pleasant, amiable chap who is determined to keep his home. He will see this through to the end."

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Theologian's QC challenges sex attack charges

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

CASES of sexual assault against an Edinburgh theologian were challenged yesterday by his lawyer on the ground that they were not backed by enough evidence. He called for "not guilty" verdicts.

Professor Donald Macleod, 55, a Free Church of Scotland lecturer described as a "charismatic theologian with a large following", denies five charges involving five women. A sixth charge was dropped on Wednesday over a discrepancy on the date of the alleged offence.

Andrew Hardie, QC, for the defence, pointed out that under Scottish law there should be evidence in addition to that given by the alleged victim. The Crown is relying on a rule that allows similar charges to support each other.

Mr Hardie argued that a 35-year-old statistics lecturer was so much more serious than the other allegations that it could not be supported by them. The only similar allegation was another serious sexual assault charge involving the same woman and she could not provide independent support for her evidence.

Another charge alleged Professor Macleod tried to kiss a

36-year-old woman but even if this were true the Crown had failed to prove criminal intent, Mr Hardie said.

Another case in which the professor is alleged to have kissed his unwilling victim in his study happened five years later and was too distant in time to be supported by them, the QC said. Professor Macleod has already lodged an alibi defence against another charge.

Sheriff John Horneburgh, QC, will decide today whether to accept Mr Hardie's request after hearing arguments by Margaret Graham for the Crown.

Earlier yesterday the court was shown a police video in which Professor Macleod dismissed the allegations of the 35-year-old statistics lecturer as "completely untrue".

He told police that he had been "hounded for ten years" by people in the church who had taken allegations against him to the church authorities although the complaints had been thrown out.

He said the lecturer was closely involved with people who were part of a "major conspiracy" and claimed his statements had changed over time.

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Terrorists choose least likely target in millionaires' row

By ADRIAN LEE AND STEWART TENDLER

WHEN the IRA bombed 22 The Boltons on Wednesday night, the blast rattled the windows of London's rich and famous. Properties in the road in South Kensington, where royalty and pop stars rub shoulders with sheikhs and industrialists, have changed hands for £9 million.

Police believe the bomb contained about 1lb of Semtex. There were no injuries and damage was limited, although police said anyone close to the blast could have been killed.

The bomb was placed behind a wall in the garden of No 22. The terrorists telephoned a coded warning and an imprecise location to the Associated Press agency ten minutes before it went off.

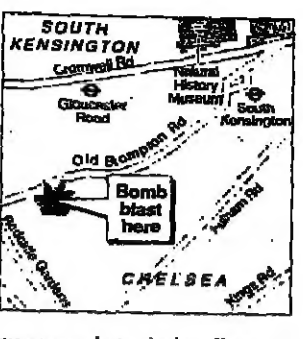
Officers are checking to see if it was similar to the device exploded by the IRA last month near Brompton Cemetery, less than a mile away. The explosive and timing device could be part of a cache of equipment kept by Edward O'Brien, the bomber killed in the Aldwych blast. Detectives know some of the material is missing.

Why the bombers chose No 22, which was clearly empty and undergoing repair work, is a mystery. Despite its £3 million price tag, the 1840s Grade II listed building is one of the more anonymous in the neighbourhood.

It was once owned by a Greek shipping magnate and is a former home of the Kuwaiti royal family. Land registry records show it was bought last year by a man called Bassam Debs. The house is undergoing extensive refurbishment and the new owners, who are believed to be Lebanese, have applied to Kensington and Chelsea council to extend the basement.

As forensic experts finished their work at the house yesterday, the interior designers were getting back to work. When Mr Debs eventually takes up residence in The Boltons, he will be moving into one of London's most exclusive areas.

Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, president of the



supermarket chain, lives at No 9; the Prime Minister of Bahrain and his son also have homes there. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, has four of his seven British residences in The Boltons.

Michael Alison, MP for Selby and a former Minister at the Northern Ireland Office, lived next door until three years ago. "The police have assured me that they believe the fact that I lived at that flat was not connected to the explosion," he said.

One of The Boltons' most charismatic residents is Lady Ridsdale, 74, wife of Sir Julian, the former MP for Harwich. A wartime colleague of the author Ian Fleming, Paddy Ridsdale was the model for Miss Moneypenny. While working with Fleming at the Admiralty on special naval operations she was involved in one of the most successful ruses used against the Axis.

Fake documents were placed on the body of a civilian, who had died from natural causes, and it was dumped in the sea. The enemy was fooled into thinking the dead man was a drowned senior officer carrying invasion plans and deployed defences in the wrong area.

Lady Ridsdale became the girlfriend of "the man who never was". To make the hoax work she wrote love letters to the man, which were also planted on the body.

The IRA explosion brought back memories of the Blitz for Lady Ridsdale. "It wasn't as loud as the bomb that demolished a block of houses near here in the war, but it was obvious what it was. We didn't leave our home when the Nazis bombed us so there's nothing the IRA can do. It was

just a silly little thing." Nick Rhodes, of the pop group Duran Duran, was once a resident. The female groupies who used to gather outside his home did not endear him to his neighbours. James Sherwood, the American founder and president of Sea Containers Group, is another occupant.

The bomb also disturbed a group of Franciscan nuns who own a property there. "I thought it was a plane in distress," Sister Kathleen said. "I stayed in bed and prayed."

Gerald Stonehill, 70, a music consultant who lives next door to the bombed house, had a lucky escape. He and six relatives were to have celebrated his mother-in-law's ninetieth birthday in a front room which was showered with shards of glass. At the last minute they decided to eat out. "Unquestionably we would have been seriously hurt had we been at home," said Mr Stonehill, a resident of The Boltons for 37 years.



The Boltons normally attracts attention solely because of its residents' wealth

'Pariahs' have no place at peace table, says Major

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE IRA and Sinn Fein will become international pariahs if the campaign of violence continues, John Major said yesterday after the fifth terrorist attack since the ceasefire collapsed.

Speaking as Scotland Yard investigated the latest IRA bomb, the Prime Minister said: "It seems to have been an exercise for no apparent purpose other than to remind people that they still have a capacity to mount terrorist exercises." He added: "Unless there is a ceasefire, a very viable ceasefire, that is clear-cut, then there will be no part in the peace process for Sinn Fein."

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said the terrorists had to choose whether they were following the path of peaceful politics or violence. "One cannot pursue the two paths simultaneously," he told the Dail.

The attack led to cross-party unrest at Westminster last night over plans to allow Sinn Fein into the proposed all-party talks in Northern Ire-

land. Although the party will not be allowed in unless there is an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire, Tory MPs fear that a last-minute declaration could be enough to bring Sinn Fein to the negotiating table on June 10.

Tory and Unionist politicians told Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, that during the 17-month ceasefire the IRA had been involved in punishment beatings, extortion, torture and preparation of further bombings in Britain.

Sir Patrick moved to reassure MPs that Sinn Fein will not be invited to the talks automatically if there is a ceasefire before June 10. He said it would have to convince other parties involved in the talks that there was a lasting ceasefire. He added that the IRA's "abominable attacks" had excluded it from political negotiations.

Marjorie Mowlam, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "There is no way that parties can bomb their way to the negotiating table."



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Major avoids party unrest with 'apology' to Redwood

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN MAJOR moved swiftly to prevent a new bout of Tory conflict yesterday by assuring John Redwood, his rival in last year's leadership contest, that he had not been criticising him when he rejected "reckless" tax cuts.

Downing Street offered what Mr Redwood's colleagues described as a full apology over reports of remarks that had been interpreted as an attack on the former Welsh Secretary.

Mr Redwood reacted angrily on Wednesday night when told by the BBC that Mr Major had privately suggested that the programme he had put forward on the day after the Staffordshire by-election defeat was "reckless and silly".

Mr Redwood's aides contacted John Ward, the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Private Secretary, to demand an explanation.

But with Mr Major in Prague, communications were difficult and no clarification was forthcoming. Mr Redwood then issued a statement that his programme had been misrepresented and suggested that Mr Major was risking party unity.

Mr Major's determination to maintain the uneasy Right-Left truce was underlined when he instructed Norman Blackwell, the head of the Downing Street policy unit, to call Mr Redwood yesterday morning. Mr Blackwell insisted that Mr Major had not been criticising Mr Redwood when he used the words reckless and silly. He even added that Mr Major strongly agreed with a lot of things Mr Redwood had been saying, most notably in his article in *The Times* last Saturday.

Last night Mr Redwood appeared to be content with Mr Major's assurance. He said: "I did not think he could

be referring to the policies I have proposed. I am very pleased they have said that."

The episode has further highlighted the differences within the Tory party over the pace and scale of tax cuts that Kenneth Clarke should introduce in the November Budget.

When asked about Mr Major's remarks, Mr Clarke said that they were directed at "the idea of tax cuts which cannot be afforded".

But Edward Leigh told BBC Radio 4's *The World at One*: "Kenneth Clarke won't admit now that his priority is tax cuts because that would give the impression that he was thinking politically, and he mustn't do that. But of course we must have tax cuts - because that is the way in which we can make it in our supporters' interests to vote Conservative."

"Therefore there will be tax cuts, and they have to be substantial tax cuts. We have to be looking at, sort of, the

base rate being reduced for everybody down to 20p, something really dramatic."

He claimed that the Tories could not win the election without tax cuts and said he suspected the risk was being exaggerated to lower expectations before the Budget.

Mr Clarke told the programme: "It would be nice to have tax cuts, but I don't agree with Edward Leigh, if he thinks of any old tax cuts. If I can afford it I'll cut taxes, and I'm sure that will help to reinforce our success. But I think you could lose an election if you cut taxes in a reckless and silly way, as the Prime Minister said."

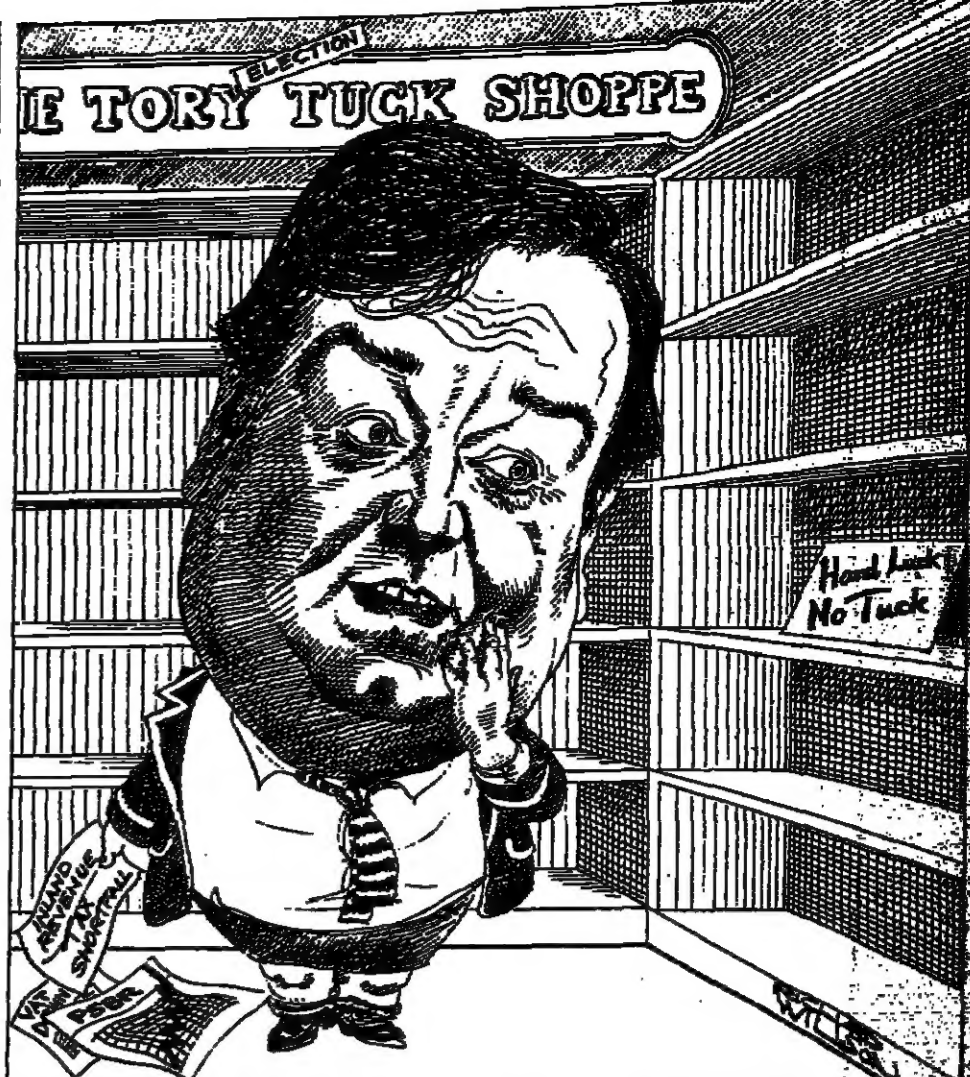
"People are not idiots. People wish to have politicians who look credible and competent. They know Conservatives want to reduce taxes - they know Labour will put taxes up. But when the Conservatives reduce taxation, they want it to be demon-

strated on the basis of what can be afforded, and what's good for the economy."

Labour revelled in the Major-Redwood exchange. John Prescott, the deputy party leader, accused Mr Major of pandering to the Right by grovelling to Mr Redwood. "Calling Mr Redwood's views reckless and silly should be no cause for an apology from anybody. Mr Major seems to have forgotten that he is Prime Minister. He is incapable of leadership and is still in the grip of the Right, who want to make him lurch further and further every day."

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Treasury ministers and Deputy Prime Minister, Northern Ireland (Sally to Negotiations Bill, second reading, in the Lords; Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Bill, report; Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, committee. TODAY in the Commons: Sexual Offences (Conspiracy and Incitement) Bill, report; Regulation of Funding of Political Parties Bill, second reading. The Lords is not sitting.



Exclusive! Tories reveal the good news

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Tories admitted defeat yesterday in the battle to secure more positive press coverage and launched their own tabloid newspaper.

Look!, a 16-page freesheet, is packed with "good news" about how the Government is transforming Britain for the better. And what good news there is. Under the Tories, British sportsmen will actually start winning (sports, page 16).

"It may prove the starting point for a British triumph over the All Blacks in rugby, the humbling of Brazil at soccer and the Test Match devastation of Australia." Crime is falling (page 2), the National Lottery is transforming lives (page 3), education is better funded (page 5) and the economy is booming (pages 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15).

Look! even secured a scoop interview with John Major. There are those - the Glums - who still prefer to ignore all the facts and continue spreading a message

of doom and gloom," he says. "I felt it was time to set the record straight once and for all because the Glums are doing Britain a disservice. That is why this newspaper is being produced. It is to give the people the true facts."

The 100,000 copies printed so far will be sent to Tory associations, and handed out to the public in shopping malls and train stations. But if the supply of newspapers is limitless, the supply of good news is apparently not: no date has been fixed for the second edition.

Why the Right is wrong to clamour for tax cuts

RIDDELL
ON POLITICS

Kenneth Clarke is correct and the Tory Right is wrong. There may be little room for substantial tax cuts this November without putting at risk the hard-fought improvement in the Government's finances. The room for fiscal and monetary manoeuvre is so small that some ministers are wondering about the possibility of an autumn election.

The reaction of the Tory Right to the by-election rout and the latest polls has been to demand big cuts in spending and taxes before the election. This plea is presented in measured terms by John Redwood: as an instinctive desire for "clear blue water" by John Townsend and the backbench right; and as an increasingly shrill and desperate appeal for action by the partisan Tory press.

But these demands ignore the economic realities. Public sector borrowing for the financial year just ended was £32.2 billion - £3.2 billion higher than forecast in the November Budget and £10 billion more than projected in the November 1994 Budget. The deterioration is not because of lousy over public spending. While spending is only slightly higher than expected last November, it is now virtually flat in real terms.

The problem is on the tax side where revenues have fallen more than £9 billion below forecast levels - and were even £2.4 billion less

than expected last November. Much of this shortfall is so far unexplained and cannot easily be remedied without, say, extending the tax base to counter evasion.

As spending is already under tight control, there are no easy cuts. It is always possible to find £1 or £2 billion through squeezing running costs. But real cuts would require cutbacks in services or entitlements, which would take time to come through and would provoke a political outcry before the election. The actions which Peter Lilley has taken to trim social security commitments produce big savings eventually, but they take time to appear. The private finance initiative also has a gradual impact and is essentially only a way of deferring government payments. It is not possible to conjure up spending cuts out of nowhere.

The Government should perhaps be looking for a tightening of the fiscal position, not a loosening via tax cuts, to offset this deterioration in borrowing. So it is not surprising that John Major has described demands for big tax cuts as "reckless and silly" and Mr Clarke has given warning against trying to buy the next election through tax cuts. They are both making a virtue out of fiscal necessity.

Moreover, interest rates may have to rise later this

year, as Mr Clarke and Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank, admitted in the minutes of their March 7 meeting published on Wednesday. Mr George warned of "the possibility that rates would have to be raised again at some point further ahead" if monetary growth did not begin to moderate and when there was clearer evidence that the growth of demand and output had begun to accelerate.

So in economic terms, there is a case for an autumn election if the Budget is not going to produce much in the way of tax cuts and interest rates may have to be raised then. While the Government should survive until the autumn, its political position could look increasingly precarious over the winter if it suffers more by-election defeats or defections.

The strong preference of Conservative Central Office is for May 1 next year, to allow time for rising living standards and any tax cuts to work through. Prime ministers are reluctant to risk their office prematurely when their party is behind in the polls. As James Callaghan showed in 1978-79 and Mr Major did, successfully, in 1991-92. Next spring is the most likely election date for the Tories may receive an economic boost by waiting than they have previously hoped.

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Wilson: statue planned

Tykes keep Wilson pounds in pockets

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE pound in your pocket is firmly being kept there, campaigners have found as they try to raise money for a statue of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx.

The public appeal to fund a memorial to the late Labour Prime Minister, who sought to reassure the nation over his government's devaluation of the pound, has a target of £25,000. After five weeks it has persuaded people to part with £250.

It is the second embarrassment the scheme has caused civic leaders in Lord Wilson's home town of Huddersfield. They had already been pilloried over suggestions from council officials that the statue could be sited near a loading bay behind a new shopping precinct or on the staircase of a multi-storey car park at the bus station.

Shamed last month by public reaction, members of Kirklees Borough Council selected a prime site in front of Huddersfield's railway station, a Grade I listed building. But in a display of Yorkshire thrift they voted not to spend council money on the memorial.

Instead they agreed to invest £10,000 in finance bureaux for two local people to study with the Open University, one of Lord Wilson's proudest creations, and presumed on public generosity for the statue. Eric Lawson, a leading councillor, said yesterday that the appeal had "gone off at half-cock" and would be relaunched next month.

Thousands flock in hope to the great allcomers' art show

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A MAN who has made dozens of unsuccessful attempts to have his paintings accepted by the annual Royal Academy Summer Exhibition returned to Burlington House yesterday to have another go. Like so many of the hopefuls who turned up with bubble-wrapped packages, he was undeterred by rejection.

Dennis Hawkins, from Repton, Derbyshire, might have taken comfort from Constable and Stanley Spencer, who were among those rejected by the Summer Exhibition in its 227-year history. The world's largest open show, selected by the artists who govern the Royal Academy, has been held every year since 1769, uninterrupted even by war.

Within hours of the doors opening for submissions, hundreds of people were heading down Piccadilly with their creations. More than 2,000 works were expected by the end of the first day for submission. Last year the academy received nearly 12,000 entries, of which 1,100 made it.

Mr Hawkins said that faith kept drawing him back. Despite being excluded from previous shows, his enthusiasm was undimmed and he had high hopes for the three water-colour seascapes he was submitting this year. "It's wonderful that in England we've got this tradition of giving a little pleasure once a year to allcomers, in the glorious hope that an unrecognised Turner is hidden," he said.

The 16 members of the

adjudicating committee began their afternoon session by sipping beef tea fortified with sherry, a Summer Exhibition ritual for as long as anyone can remember.

Professional and amateur artists are drawn each year to the show. One woman spent an hour wrapping her entry. Some looked so downcast it was as if they knew that the only walls on which their work would ever be hung were those at home.

Most were good-humoured and hopeful. Judith Lockie, from Suffolk, had had five unsuccessful attempts but was back again. "It's a lottery," she said, unpacking a print. "It's a weird show. Very English. There's such a mixture of ghastly work and brilliant stuff."

A Londoner, David Walter,



Constable: was turned down by the academy

who gave up a mathematics professorship in the Far East to paint, had also tried five times. Hoping to be sixth-time lucky, he said: "I just keep going. One day it'll happen. It's such a wonderful show. Any Tom, Dick and Harry like me can spend a tender and submit work." He joked about feeling angry when he came across not one but three ghastly works by the same artist at one show.

Several others had come to painting when their circumstances had changed. Andrew Davies, a self-taught artist from East Grinstead, West Sussex, was a fireman until he broke his ankle playing volleyball and was forced to retire.

Anne Davies, from Harpenden in Hertfordshire, who had worked as a saleswoman, started painting four years ago after falling down three flights of stairs. Painting proved therapeutic and she joined all sorts of art clubs. Her work was accepted last year. "It was incredible. Unbelievable," she said. Yesterday she submitted miniature landscapes.

A number of the pictures delivered yesterday would have been loved by the traditionalists or dismissed as "Bayswater railings works" by those who champion the schools of pickled animals and sleeping actresses.

It is not too late to enter this year. A maximum of three works can be submitted until May 3. The exhibition runs from June 9 to August 18.



One of the 2,000 artists expected to have submitted their works yesterday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Husband on murder charge

The former husband of a woman found tied up and drowned in a river in Cardiff was charged yesterday with her murder. The partially clothed body of Karen Skipper, 34, was recovered from the River Ely on March 10 after she disappeared while walking her two dogs.

Her former husband, Philip, was arrested by detectives at Ferndale, Rhondda, on Tuesday. South Wales Constabulary said Mr Skipper, 38, would appear before magistrates today.

Sporting gesture

Pupils, their parents and teachers from Dunblane Primary School will be guests of Celtic Football Club at its match against Falkirk tomorrow. The club will be collecting for several charities, including the Dunblane Fund.

York breaks arm

The actress Susannah York, 54, was recovering in hospital at Cosham, Hampshire, yesterday after she fell over and broke her arm while filming some closing shots for *Dark Blue Perfume*, the latest Ruth Rendell television drama, at West Meon.

Two committed

A 15-year-old accused of murdering Philip Lawrence, the London headmaster, and another 15-year-old, both of west London, jointly accused of conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm to a juvenile, have been committed to stand trial at the Old Bailey.

£22,000 'tip'

A retired hairdresser who cut a former customer's hair for free was left £22,000 in her will. Beryl Harris, 68, of Mumbles, Swansea, was also left jewellery by Anne Llewellyn-Williams, 103, of Penmaen, West Glamorgan.

Safety first

The five-star May Fair International hotel in London is to stock its mini-bars with packs containing condoms, tampons, plasters, aspirin and indigestion tablets. Cigarettes and disposable cameras will also be available.

Welsh clergy refuse church weddings for divorcees

By LIN JENKINS

A PROPOSAL that Welsh Anglicans should allow divorcees to remarry in church suffered a surprise defeat yesterday when the clergy voted to uphold tradition in the face of change promoted by the bishops. The Bill would have permitted regular members of the congregation to wed for a second time in church.

The ballot for approval was lost by two votes at the meeting of the Church in Wales's ruling body at the

University of Wales in Lampeter. Dyfed. The proposal had needed a majority of two thirds in all three sections — bishops, laity and clergy — but fell to the latter.

Several parish clergy had threatened to boycott reform. Under the Bill they would have been able to exercise their discretion in the matter if they were strongly opposed to remarrying divorcees.

After intense debate during the Bill's third reading, in which bishops and lay members argued in favour of

change, the vote was so close that a recount was ordered. Eventual victory by the traditionalists is seen as a major blow to reform, including the ordination of women priests, which is still banned in Wales. Opponents of the Bill argued it would further undermine the sanctity of marriage.

The Rt Rev Barry Morgan, Bishop of Bangor, who introduced the Bill and was one of its strongest supporters, denied that the solemn vows of marriage would be devalued. He argued that given that the Church

was prepared to bless the union of divorcees, it should be prepared to remarry them in certain circumstances. "I would have to give the impression that we believe marriage is no longer a permanent relationship between one man and one woman. But we believe that the principle of compassion and forgiveness is also very important."

The Church of England is still opposed in principle to remarriage in church. However, since the 1980s the decision has been left to individual

clergy, providing the diocesan bishop approves, although it goes against canon law. The Act of Convocation of 1957 states that the Church "should not allow the use of that service in the case of anyone who has a former partner still living."

The Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian denomination in which the Princess Royal remarried, allows a minister to solemnise a second marriage in church providing that he does not accede to a matter of routine.

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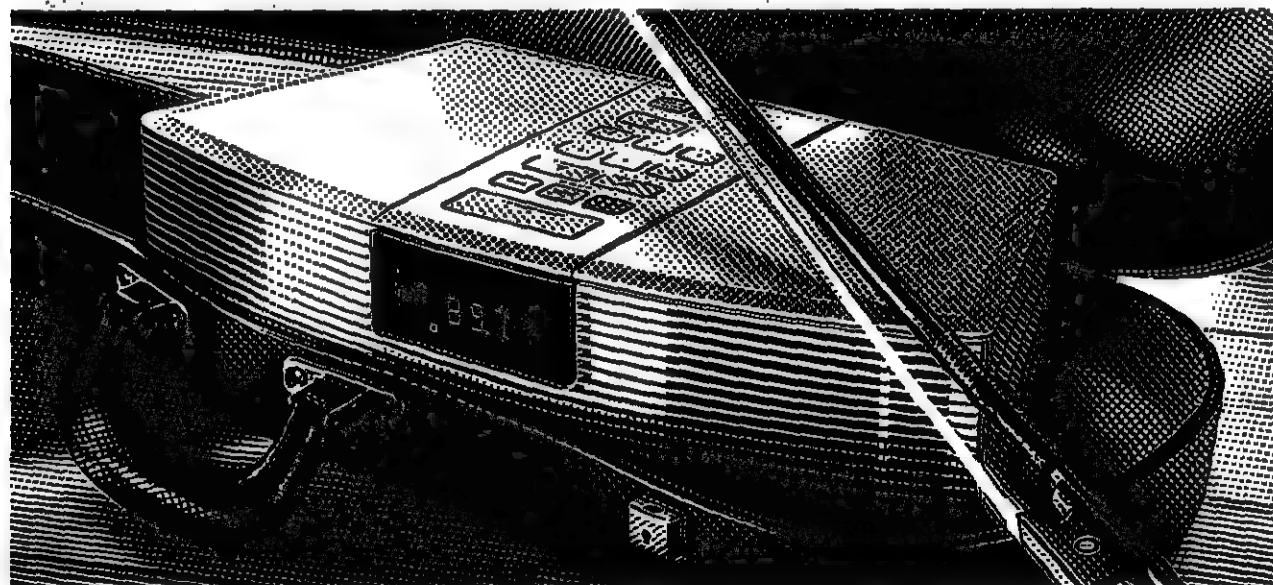
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Gunmen slaughter Greek pilgrims at Cairo hotel

FROM LAURI NEFF
IN CAIRO

GUNMEN shouting "God is great" killed 17 Greek tourists on an Easter pilgrimage and one Egyptian in a machinegun attack at a Cairo hotel yesterday.

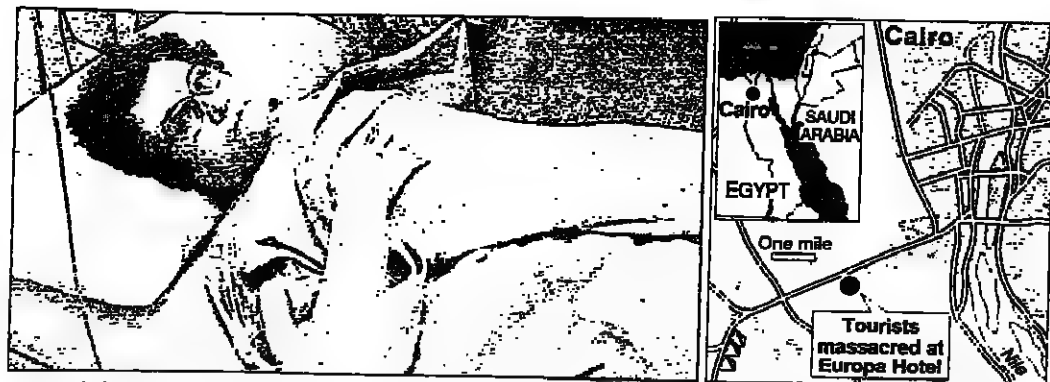
Another 15 were injured when the four gunmen opened fire outside the Europa Hotel, on the road leading to the pyramids at Giza. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but suspicion fell on Islamic militants who have been waging a violent campaign to overthrow the Egyptian Government.

Witnesses said the attackers first took aim at a group waiting for a tourist bus and then at least one of the assailants ran inside.

When I arrived on the scene a few hours after the attack, blood and glass covered the ground in front of the hotel and in the lobby. My shoes were smeared red after walking through the area.

Some Australian tourists travelling with the Greek group described what happened. Anna Borkowska, of Sydney, was about to leave the restaurant when the shooting started. "The man in front of me was shot in the legs," she said. "There was blood everywhere. He must have died from the bleeding."

The group was visiting holy sites in Israel and Egypt. "The people who died died for their faith and belief in God, and they were martyrs," Mrs Borkowska said. "They died after worship-



An injured Greek tourist admitted to a Cairo hospital, and where yesterday's attack occurred

ping the Almighty in Jerusalem," Harry Paulinanas, 23, from Sydney, said he was still stunned hours after the attack. "I heard about five or six shots," Mr Paulinanas said. "I didn't realise what had happened. I heard screaming, saw bodies going down. I ran for my life and dodged a few bullets."

Several dozen riot police carrying plastic shields and machine-guns lined the street in front of the hotel. Inside, scores of Egyptian officials shouted orders and questions as they herded a crowd of frightened tourists into the restaurant. As they filed by, they passed a bottle of water still intact that lay in a pool of blood. Witnesses said the woman who had been holding the bottle had been shot.

Hanna Iwanowska, from the Polish city of Gdansk, said she had just arrived at the hotel from Cairo airport and was waiting for

her room key when the attack began.

"At first I didn't imagine it was serious, but I lay down and crawled behind the reception desk," she said, adding that she did not see the attackers, as she was too frightened to look up from the ground. Many of the witnesses said they were unsure of what had happened because of the swiftness and unexpectedness of the attack.

The injured were taken to a nearby hospital, where they were treated for wounds from gunfire and broken glass. Most of those hurt were elderly Greeks, who were left confused and frightened by the attack.

From his hospital bed, Manolakis Youanis, 70, who is from a small village in Crete, held up his bandaged arm where he said he had been hit by several bullets.

"We were waiting outside the

hotel to board a bus to Alexandria when the shooting started," Mr Youanis said. "I don't know who was shooting because we were talking among ourselves and suddenly we were surrounded by bullets. Many were killed and I saw a lot of blood."

Iloneedo Safra, 68, of Athens, wept as she showed me her injuries. Her frail legs were covered with shrapnel and glass wounds. She trembled as she talked of seeing the gunmen approaching.

The Egyptian Interior Ministry said the attackers had arrived outside the hotel in an unmarked van without number plates.

Radical groups, such as El Gamaa and El Islamiya, have in the past targeted foreign tourists in an effort to cripple the country's tourist industry. Before yesterday's attack, more than 420 people, including 30 foreigners, had been killed in Egyptian politi-

cal violence during the last four years. The spate of shootings had appeared to be easing recently, however, with attacks mainly confined to tourists visiting the south of the country.

The last major attack on tourists in Cairo was in 1993, when Muslim extremists armed with explosives and guns opened fire on a tour bus, wounding eight Austrians and eight Egyptian passers-by.

The pilgrims caught up in yesterday's attack had started their journey in Athens and continued to Jerusalem before arriving in Cairo.

A young Greek girl who declined to give her name trembled and burst into tears as she spoke of the dead and wounded. "I cannot imagine these things that happen to innocent people," she said. "I came here just to pray."

The hotel is thought to be frequented by Israeli tourists. A hotel operator denied that a group of Israeli Jews were staying there, but said the guest list included Israeli Arabs.

Athens: Greece reacted with sorrow and anger to the Cairo attack yesterday. "Everyone is shocked and there is deep grief," President Stephanopoulos said.

Two Greek Air Force transport planes flew to Cairo to pick up the bodies of the victims, and a number of the injured as could be moved. A special Olympic Airways flight laid on for the relatives was scheduled to take off for Cairo last night. (Reuters)



Egyptian police inspect a bullet-scarred tourist bus outside the Cairo hotel

Bitter blow dealt to Mubarak campaign against radicals

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT

YESTERDAY'S massacre of tourists in Egypt was a bitter blow for the pro-Western Government of President Mubarak. It had been boasting unwisely that the four-year-old campaign by Islamic militants had been largely contained.

Whether the motive was revenge for Israeli attacks against Hezbollah, or a continuation of the battle started in 1992 to drive out tourists and cut off the Government's main source of hard currency, the effect will be more instability in a country vital to the region's peace.

Egypt's bullish assessment that a hardline policy of repression — including more than 40 executions of Islamic militants — had been successful was shared by many Western diplomats based in Cairo. It was supported by figures showing a recent increase of nearly 20 per cent in the number of tourists, despite the continuing threat against them by the main terrorist group, Gamaa al-Islamiya.

Since late 1993, the battle between the militants and the 15-year-old Mubarak Government had been largely confined to rural areas of southern Egypt. To date, nearly 1,000 people have died in the violence which is designed to convert Egypt's traditionally tolerant society into an Iranian-style theocratic state.

None of the 23 previous attacks against tourists, including the killing of a British woman in October 1992, had any of yesterday's methodical ruthlessness — which is one reason why some Egyptian commentators believe that the victims may have been mistaken for Israelis.

The embarrassment for President Mubarak is increased because the attack follows the 29-nation anti-terrorism conference, attended by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, which he hosted in the heavily guarded Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh.

Assisted by a number of veterans of the Afghan War, the leader of Gamaa has found Egypt a fertile recruiting ground because of its social and economic problems. More than half the population cannot read, and unemployment is estimated at 20 per cent.

To date, the key to Mr Mubarak's survival has been the loyalty of the 400,000-strong army plus his network of security services. But the loyalties of an increasing number of middle and lower-ranking members of the security forces are not above suspicion. The danger for the West is that if Egypt should fall into extreme Muslim hands, it is assumed that Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Jordan and even Syria could swiftly follow suit.

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Gillian Shephard on standards in our schools



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Gooch takes on watching brief for England

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY APRIL 19 1996

Cable and Wireless shares leap on BT merger hopes



By ERIC REGULY

SHARES of Cable and Wireless leapt yesterday on speculation that an agreement to merge with British Telecom was imminent. But the companies played down the rumours, saying substantive issues remained before they could sign a broad agreement to create £35 billion global telecoms group.

The charge includes £76 million of goodwill and will have no effect on the company's cash position. C&W said the write-down would be more than offset by the £199 million gain booked on sale of its 5 per cent

interest in Mannesmann Mobilfunk, a mobile phone operator in Germany. The charge does not appear, as some investors assumed, as a bout of "house cleaning" in preparation for the merger with BT. One analyst said: "This is more about getting rid of the things that Lord Young collected."

Lord Young of Graffham was ousted as chairman in November along with James Ross, the chief executive. At the time, C&W was coming under fire for devoting too much management time on small

investments in risky countries. The charge relates mainly to investments in four companies with operations in Russia, Belorussia, Latvia and Bulgaria. C&W's 32 per cent stake in Petersburg Long Distance, a Canadian company with a telecoms business in St Petersburg, is the best known of the lot. Its \$106 million investment has lost more than a third of its value in the past two years. The next largest is C&W's majority interest in a joint venture whose only asset is a 49 per

Young, ousted as chairman

Sterling lifted by surprise German move

By JANET BUSH AND PHILIP BASSETT

A SURPRISE cut in German interest rates boosted sterling yesterday and revived hopes in the City that British rates could be cut again. The Bundesbank cut its discount rate to 2.5 per cent from 3 per cent and its emergency Lombard financing rate to 4.5 per cent from 5 per cent, both changes effective from today. The German central bank said that its key money market repo rate would be kept fixed at 3.3 per cent for at least the next two weeks. The move, takes the discount rate back to its record low seen in early 1988.

The Bundesbank was clearly responding to the chronic weakness in the German economy on the day after the Bonn Government admitted that economic growth was turning out to be far weaker than expected. The rate move also came a day after the International Monetary Fund expressed concern that the economic slowdown in Europe is compromising the ability of Germany, France and others to meet the criteria for monetary union in 1999. The IMF suggested that, with no scope to boost growth on the fiscal side as governments attempt to cut their budget deficits, lower rates would be needed.

The move by the German central bank also comes on the eve of a meeting of the Group of Seven in Washington on Sunday. While G7 countries are happy with the depreciation in the yen over the past year, there is growing concern about the weakness of the German economy.

Inflation remains unchanged at 2.7%

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BOTH key measures of British inflation remained unchanged in March compared with February as higher prices for food and leisure goods and an increase in house prices was offset by falling motorist costs. The headline rate of retail price inflation was steady at 2.7 per cent and the underlying rate, targeted by the Government, was unchanged at 2.9 per cent.

While these figures were disappointing for the financial markets, which had been hoping for small falls in inflation, there is still considerable confidence that inflation will fall in the months ahead. In April, the effect of last year's cut in mortgage interest tax relief from 20 to 15 per cent will fall out of annual comparisons and take 0.22 per cent off headline inflation. Lower mortgage rates are also expected to depress inflation over the next few months. In addition, sharp drops in industrial costs and prices should feed through to the high street.

This is a view shared by the Treasury, which noted yesterday that inflation remains low and is anticipated to fall further given that producer prices are still easing.



Investors queue for the Woolwich's annual meeting at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London yesterday

Speculators target Woolwich

By CAROLINE MERRELL, ROBERT MILLER AND ANNE ASHWORTH

SPECULATION grew that the Woolwich Building Society could now be taken over before its planned flotation yesterday, as its directors faced a barrage of acrimonious questions at the annual meeting over the sudden departure of Peter Robinson, the chief executive.

More than 1,000 savers and borrowers quizzed an embarrassed board over a report now being prepared on the circumstances surrounding Mr Robinson's departure. He was ousted following allegations of abuses of expenses and other irregularities.

The City now believes that the Woolwich has been "put into play" as a takeover target. One observer said yesterday: "The whole industry is casting its sidereal eye over the Woolwich."

Among those attending was Andrew Longhurst, Cheltenham & Gloucester chief executive — a Woolwich "carpet-bagger", having joined the society just in time to benefit from its flotation. C&G is now part of Lloyds, which remains interested in further acquisitions.

Stars and stripes for Body Shop

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE first wholly independent social audit of a leading British company voices serious criticisms of The Body Shop International, the company that commissioned it.

Kirk Hanson, the American business academic, concludes that on most social matters Body Shop is more responsible and performs above average. "Certain dimensions of its social behaviour, however, raise concerns and should be addressed promptly."

Gordon Roddick, Body Shop chairman, said the report would be an agenda for action: "Our staff training is lousy, development of employees is not good enough and our communication with franchisees is not good."

Mr Hanson, a specialist in ethics and responsibility at California's Stanford Graduate Business School, marked The Body Shop out of five on a range of tests. The group gains five or four stars on its values, relations with employees, environmental performance and social campaigning, but it barely averages three stars on relations with shareholders and ranks below par on relations with the public and its franchisees.



Roddick: "agenda for action"

London Electricity bid talk

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BID EXPECTATIONS for London Electricity yesterday grew strongly with Houston Industries believed to be the potential predator.

London's shares moved up 28p to 813p as speculation increased that a move was close. Houston joined with Central and South West Corporation for an abortive bid on Nov 1995, and is known to have kept a keen interest in moving in on the UK electricity market.

The electricity sector has been enlivened by the approach to National Power by Southern Company of the US, but is also in the midst of pre-election urgency. Potential bidders are thought to be hurrying to seal deals ahead of a possible Labour government, which has indicated a tougher stance on utility takeovers.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3820.7	(+15.1)
Yield	3.85%	
FT-SE All share	1006.39	(+8.98)
Nikkei	81612.50	(-3.72)
Dow Jones	5560.04	(+10.11)
S&P Composite	644.45	(+2.84)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	89 1/4%	(89 1/4%)
Yield	6.94%	(6.92%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	6%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	108 1/2%	(108 1/2%)
STERLING		
New York	\$ 1.8100*	(1.8097)
London	1.8078	(1.8088)
Paris	2.2708	(2.2720)
FF	7.7316	(7.7240)
SP	1.8527	(1.8488)
Yen	162.01	(163.25)
£ index	83.6	(83.6)
DOLLAR		
London	1.8073*	(1.8088)
FF	8.1148*	(8.1180)
SP	1.2228*	(1.2276)
Yen	107.13*	(108.21)
£ index	83.6	(83.6)
Tokyo close Yen 108.25		
NORTH AMERICA		
Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$17.48	(\$18.10)
OIL		
London close	\$301.48	(\$301.28)
* denotes midday trading price		

National Power spurns US suitor

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

NATIONAL POWER yesterday began to defend itself against bid interest from Southern Company by refusing to talk to the US utility. The hardening of attitude by the UK's largest generator, which had earlier issued a non-committal response to Southern's first announcement, is said to have surprised the US company which has been heavily lobbying the electricity industry. It is now thought to be possible that Southern could abandon the takeover plans. Its retreat would be a significant turnaround after it has mounted a heavy telephone campaign to win over chief executives of regional companies. Southern has been trying to persuade the industry of its case amid controversy over the plan that could put a third of Britain's power generation in American hands. National Power said there was no point in a meeting between Tom Boren, chief executive of Southern Electric International, and its own chief executive and chairman. It questioned whether Southern had the financial strength to deliver a satisfactory bid. However, many in the industry believe that Southern is on the prowl for both National Power and Southern (UK) if Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, sanctions the generator's bid for the regional company and endorses vertical integration. In a letter to Mr Boren, John Baker, chairman of National Power, said: "National Power is not now and will not be for sale" unless there is compelling shareholder value.

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BA forms alliance with US airline

BRITISH AIRWAYS has formed a new alliance with the US regional airline America West, which will connect up America's network of domestic routes with BA's transatlantic flights to Phoenix, Arizona.

BA starts a new daily non-stop service from London Gatwick to Phoenix on July 1. The new agreement will feed Phoenix passengers directly on to America West's network of services to 96 destinations, the airlines said in a joint statement.

Under the deal the airlines intend to share flight codes, an industry marketing technique that will combine BA and America West's networks in flight reservation systems.

"Subject to government approval, services to Albuquerque, Burbank, El Paso, Las Vegas, Long Beach, Oakland, Ontario, Orange County, San Jose and Tucson will carry the flight numbers of both America West and British Airways," the statement said. BA said the deal with America West, ranked the ninth largest airline in the United States, will open up the western United States to its passengers.

Peter Spencer, BA's regional director for the Americas, said: "This agreement will give our passengers access to an excellent network in south-west USA."

PIA move to make advisers liable angers investment firms

By Robert Miller

MORE than 100,000 pension and investment advisers will in future have to answer directly to their City watchdog. The announcement that advisers will have to sign individual contracts and be personally liable to fines or even expulsion from the financial services industry sparked an angry reaction from some of the largest providers of life, pensions and investment products.

The Personal Investment Authority, which polices firms selling directly to the public,

yesterday unveiled plans to introduce personal contracts between 120,000 advisers and their regulator. The PIA, headed by Colette Bowe, said the new measure would prevent an individual taking up an appointment, where PIA is not satisfied that the individual is fit and proper, and enable the PIA to take direct disciplinary action against an individual.

The PIA, which plans to introduce the tough new regime next year, will also insist that firms take even more responsibility for their sales staff by requiring them to certify, in writing, that manag-

ers and advisers employed by the company have been properly vetted. The watchdog added: "Failure to carry out this firm-based vetting will be a punishable offence."

David Mott, a spokesman for Co-operative Insurance, one of the largest firms to be affected with more than 6,000 representatives, said: "The PIA move is just bureaucratic and an unnecessary expense that will have to be borne by the customer at the end of the day. We have estimated that individual registration will cost around £150,000 in the first year alone." Mr Mott

added: "We already have the proper systems in place and the new move will simply duplicate records. The matter could reliably be left in the hands of the providers and PIA officials could monitor or check our records whenever they wanted."

Legal & General said: "The PIA move for individual contracts is very questionable. There will be very considerable additional costs involved and little positive benefit. We already have very strict monitoring criteria and systems in place."

The PIA's stand on individ-

ual contracts with sales representatives and agents will almost certainly be backed by the influential Commons Treasury Select Committee, headed by Sir Tom Arnold. Last summer Ms Bowe, PIA chief executive and her chairman Joe Palmer, former chief executive of Legal & General, were pressed to introduce individual contracts without delay.

Mr Palmer said yesterday: "The introduction of individual contracts will strengthen investor confidence. I believe it will also increase public confidence."

GRE poised to buy RAC's insurance broking side

By Marianne Curphey

GUARDIAN Royal Exchange is poised to acquire the broking side of the RAC and begin selling motor, household, health and life insurance under the RAC brand.

The bid from GRE would require the RAC to drop its panel of 20 insurers and switch all its underwriting contracts to GRE. The RAC brand will remain, and is seen by GRE as a valuable asset because of loyalty to the RAC by its six million members.

A statement yesterday from GRE confirmed discussions were being held "about a long term strategic alliance". The RAC brand will be sold via Guardian Direct, GRE's new telephone insurance service. Sun Alliance and Royal Insurance, who are on the RAC's panel, are also thought to have been approached.

The Automobile Association, which uses a panel of 42 insurers, yesterday criticised the RAC for planning to "abandon its independence". Mark Wood, managing director of AA insurance services, said: "We believe it is a misguided strategy and not one we would follow. The AA and the RAC are both membership clubs and it is important to give members the choice. The

RAC's commission income has been falling steadily and the insurance market as a whole has dropped by 14 per cent over the last few years. We have four times the motor book of the RAC and have not needed to run for cover."

Neil Johnson, the RAC chief executive, said: "Following discussions with a number of interested parties, Guardian Royal Exchange has emerged as a potential partner. It has the necessary range of capabilities for a successful and growing relationship to provide improved value and service to an RAC database of over six million individuals."

The Automobile Club, which was founded in 1897 and has been offering motor insurance for more than 20 years, is not intending to sell its motor breakdown service.

A GRE spokesman said it was not interested in acquiring breakdown business but added there was scope to increase the range of personal financial products under the RAC banner.

"Talks are going on and no final agreement has been reached but we believe the deal will give us opportunities for cross-selling," he added.



Ann Iverson: plans to expand home furnishings

Return to profit for Laura Ashley

By Sarah Bagnall

LAURA ASHLEY, the clothing and furnishing group, yesterday reported a return to profit and its first significant dividend for six years.

The shares rose 16p to 180p. Ann Iverson, chief executive since July, also disclosed plans to build up the home furnishings business by opening new stand-alone stores. Sales are currently split equally but Ms Iverson wants home furnishings sales to represent 65 per cent of group sales.

The retailer reported a pre-tax profit of £10.3 million in the year to January 27 — the highest since 1989 and a sharp turnaround from the loss of £30.6 million last time. The turnaround was achieved on the back of a 4 per cent advance in sales to £336.6 million. The group operates 175 stores in the UK, 177 in the US and 76 in Europe.

The profit improvement largely reflected tight cost controls. Ms Iverson was pleased with the advance in profits but "much remains to be done". However, confidence in the future led to payment of a final dividend of 0.5p a share. Although nominal dividends of 0.1p have been paid in previous years, this is the first significant dividend since 1993.

In the first ten weeks of this year, total shop sales are up 1 per cent overall and 3 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

Tempus, page 25

Adtranz to shed 224 jobs as new train orders dry up

By Jonathan Pryn, Transport Correspondent

BRITAIN'S train manufacturing industry suffered another blow yesterday when Adtranz, the largest UK train-maker, announced 224 redundancies.

The job losses will be from factories at Derby, Crewe and Chart Leacon, near Ashford in Kent. The biggest losses are in the bogie division in Derby, which will see 120 redundancies. A further 60 will go at Crewe and 44 at Chart Leacon.

The redundancies have been caused mainly by the absence of new train orders.

the longest in the history of the railways in Britain, since the start of rail privatisation.

A spokeswoman said that a number of rolling stock leasing companies and franchise operators were talking about possible new orders. "There is a bit of a glimmer at the end of the tunnel, with orders coming, but that will not mean anything on the factory floor for another two years," she said.

Stig Svard, Adtranz's chief executive, said: "This is a very sad day for the company and more so for those people who

will have to leave under redundancy. It is, however, a vital step to ensure that we retain our competitive edge in the very difficult market conditions in which we are operating."

Adtranz, formed in January through a merger of the railway arms of ABB and Daimler-Benz, employs 4,300 workers at 10 sites in the UK. The business used to employ 9,000 workers when it operated as the engineering section of British Rail before it was privatised in 1989.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Watchdog examines disciplinary process

THE Securities and Futures Authority, the City watchdog, is considering a revamp of its disciplinary procedures in the wake of criticism of its handling of former staff of Barings, the failed merchant bank. Nick Durlacher, the SFA chair, said that the regulator was considering the responsibilities of senior executives at regulated firms. In March the SFA began disciplinary action against individuals linked to Barings, which collapsed in February 1995. But because of its rules, the SFA was unable to name the individuals involved or the charges against them.

The regulator was also considered too lenient with the two executives at the helm of Barings, Peter Baring, the chairman, and Andrew Tuckey, his deputy. The SFA said they were not responsible for the bank's collapse yet sought assurances from them that they would not seek top management jobs in the City.

Fall in car production

CAR production fell by 12 per cent last month, compared with a year ago, and the number of commercial vehicles built suffered an even bigger decline, falling almost 18 per cent to 21,664. Figures released yesterday by the Office for National Statistics showed total car production of 148,745 last month, compared with 170,530 in March of last year. Over the first three months of the year, UK car production totalled 422,987, a rise of just 0.32 per cent on the same period in 1995.

Bloomsbury at £1m

BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING, the book publisher, lifted profits before tax by 19.2 per cent to £1.01 million in the year to December 31. The total dividend is increased to 3.4p a share from 2.64p, through a 2.72p final payout. Earnings fell to 7.8p per share from 11.46p as a result of a provision for deferred tax. The shares, unchanged by the news, were 101p. Turnover was 17.3 per cent higher at £11.37 million but there was an increase in marketing and distribution costs of almost 59 per cent to £1.39 million.

Bunzl acquires Payne

BUNZL, the international paper and plastics group, has agreed to acquire the PP Payne companies from Norcorris for £43.4 million. Payne is a supplier of self-adhesive tear tapes and a UK manufacturer of plastic strapping. In the year to March 31, 1995, the business earned operating profits of £4 million, and it is expected that a significant increase was achieved in the financial year just ended. Norcorris said the proceeds from the disposal will be used to reduce the company's borrowings.

Franc hits Peugeot sales

PSA Peugeot Citroen, the French car manufacturer, said profits fell 45 per cent to Fr1.7 billion (£187 million) last year as the franc's strength against other currencies and weak sales took their toll. Sales slipped 1.2 per cent to Fr164.25 billion. Operating margins shrank to 2.3 per cent of sales from 4.4 per cent, while the company's debt rose nearly 30 per cent. The 1995 dividend is cut by Fr1 to Fr5 a share. There was a 21 per cent drop in total car sales in France in spite of government incentives to boost demand.

Bodycote surges to £19m

BODYCOTE INTERNATIONAL, the metal technology and general industrial company, increased pre-tax profits to £19.94 million in 1995 from £15.8 million in spite of a fall in turnover to £80.39 million from £84.3 million. Bodycote Metal Technology, the firm's flagship increased profits by 41 per cent to £12.5 million, assisted by the acquisition of Powermet in Sweden. Headline earnings per share increased to 21.7p from 17.5p. A final dividend of 4.1p a share lifts the total to 6.5p from 5.75p.

BCCI settlement move

DELOITTE & TOUCHE, the United Kingdom and Cayman Islands liquidator to the failed Bank of Credit and Commerce International, is to announce plans today for a \$70 million settlement in relation to \$150 million that was allegedly "subvented" from the BCCI and ICIC Staff Benefit Trusts in 1986. The liquidator is to put up \$50 million and a third, unnamed party, the remaining \$20 million. Hearings will be held in the Cayman Islands on May 27 and in the High Court in London on June 4.

Henry Boot at record

HENRY BOOT & SONS, the construction company, achieved a 6.5 per cent increase in profits last year in spite of difficult trading conditions in the industry. Profits rose to a record £8.69 million before tax from £8.16 million and earnings were 23.6p a share, rising from 22.8p. There is a final dividend of 5.55p a share, making a total of 7.5p (7.1p). The shares rose 3p to 223p. Turnover fell marginally to £179.2 million from £184 million. House sales fell below the levels of the previous year.

Preliminary Announcement of 1995 Results

Year Ended 31 December 1995

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS	1995	1994
Total Turnover	£4,614.2m	£4,156.2m
Total Trading Profit	£365.6m	£317.0m
Profit before Exceptional Profit and Taxation	£329.3m	£283.3m
Earnings per share before Exceptional Profit	77.5p	66.3p*

Proposed final dividend of 17.6p per share (1994 - 16.0p) making a total paid and proposed for the year of 25.3p per share, an increase of 10.0 per cent over the 23.0p paid for 1994.

* Adjusted to reflect the bonus element included in the 1995 rights issue.

The 1995 Annual Report will be posted to shareholders on 3rd May 1996. To reserve a copy, telephone 01932 568833.

RMC Group p.l.c.

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In addition, to show our appreciation for their loyalty, the standard variable base rate for existing borrowers who have been with us for five calendar years or more as at 31 December 1995* will be

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Watchdog examines disciplinary process

all in car production

rooms-bury at Elm

anal acquires Payne

and his Peugeot

drive surges to £1

£1 settlement may

try Bowl at record

As a
thank you
- staying
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re moving
your
age rate
down.

Wallflowers at the building societies' hop A candid exercise in self-revelation Will BT square up to the regulator?

Care to take the floor?

REMEMBER the horrors of adolescence — the spots, the tantrums, the self-doubt, and worst of all, the Saturday evenings at the teenage hop among all the other wallflowers? So sympathise for a moment with those as yet unmatched building societies' chiefs who must attend next month's annual jamboree in Birmingham.

This year's great building society scramble has become like the great utilities scramble of last autumn that has been so helpfully revived by the Americans. In both cases, thousands and thousands of investors who had plumped their few hundred quid on the counter hoping for only modest returns in fairly obscure unexpected windfalls.

In both cases, their gains have encouraged others from outside to try to identify the next domino to fall. In utilities, they are called investors and have some degree of respectability; in building societies, they are carpetbaggers and are universally reviled.

In both cases, the scramble has left a few wallflowers, not by any means the worst of the bunch, wondering where they went wrong. There are three regional electricity companies as yet unbitten: there are likewise, of the top ten building societies, three that look set to retain their mutual status. What will the

chiefs of the Nationwide, the Bradford & Bingley and the Yorkshire say to their peers in Birmingham?

The answer is that all three will emphasise the benefits of continuing independence and mutualism, and several have put up convincing arguments to that effect. But their problem is that rivals, like that to buy a British utility, has acquired its own momentum. Electricity and, to a lesser extent, water now has a scarcity value that, according to classic laws of supply and demand, means that if you truly want a company, you had better act now.

Likewise building societies, while investors also have purely financial incentives not to lose out on the rush. If you are a bank seeking to buy a society that is thinking of floating, all you have to do is put a higher price on the table to the members than the incumbent management can afford, paying for it out of the perceived benefits of "synergy". If your quarry is not looking to demutualise, then you have to persuade the members their

short-term interests are better served by a lump sum now.

Which brings us to the Woolwich, whose bad-tempered meeting yesterday was at least spared an appearance by Peter Robinson as Banquo's Ghost to make things worse. The assumption when he went last month was that this would not derail progress to a stock market float. By now the betting must be that it will, not least because of that Cadarene-like momentum. Any partner would have no difficulty topping the £1,000 handout available to the average Woolwich investor, and would have time on its side. Care to dance?



can business academic who spent 60 days coming up with a more down-to-earth "audit" than sceptics might have expected. As a result, it turned into an exercise that all big companies should consider, even if the principles and practice they want to test are quite different from those of Anita and Gordon Roddick.

The company had a particular problem. Having traded on its social responsibility and fair dealing, as well as the benign nature of its products, it found the very strength of its brand under threat when American critics attacked its record. The company set up its own attitude audit among "stakeholder" groups, published as a "Social Statement" in January. As chair-

man Gordon Roddick admits, however, this would never win credibility among critics on its own. It still needed courage to hand over to a tough outsider.

Mr Hanson identified much the same strengths and weaknesses as the internal audit, but his judgments are much harsher than the generally approving British stakeholders. So the audit has educated management and become a useful agenda for action on anything from board structure to training, instead of merely rallying its self-image.

Ironically, the harshest verdict was over the company's defensive reaction to criticism. Publication of this 30-page wars-and-all report answers that. It might also put off others. There is a difference between being open and confessing all your sins in public.

Mr Roddick, who had to suffer sleepless nights, advises that others might prefer to commission their first couple of audits as a private exercise before revealing all, to avoid any chance of an exercise in self-improvement deteriorating into self-destruction. Many others

could benefit from such a candid exercise. As at Body Shop, trading performance should benefit too once action is taken.

When surrender has its merits

ON THE surface, there is no link between BT's efforts to merge with Cable and Wireless and BT's efforts to thwart Ofcom. The merger is aimed at creating a £35 billion global phone and multimedia company; the fight with the regulator is to ensure that Ofcom does not succeed in reducing BT's prices to the point that its domestic operations become, in effect, a social service.

Ofcom has said it would go nuclear and resort to a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry if BT rejects the new formula, a fight to be determined by the summer. But consider this: the C&W merger negotiations might have the effect of reducing the likelihood of such an inquiry. This is for two reasons. BT is working flat out to reach an agreement in principle

with C&W by the summer and does not need the mammoth distraction of an MMC probe while management is already approaching overload.

More significantly, BT does not need the uncertainty, because uncertainty is always bad for share prices. BT and C&W plan to come together through a share swap, and so it is in BT's best interests to ensure that its shares are trading as high as possible when the terms of the deal are struck. An MMC inquiry might rattle investors, who, with all good reason, would fear that it might go against BT.

BT would never admit that it is considering a retreat in the war with Ofcom. Avoiding an inquiry, however, might make the process of building one of the largest and most diverse world telecoms groups a lot easier.

Lucky Ken?

PERHAPS Kenny Ken should henceforth be known as Lucky Ken. Fortune really does seem to smile on our Chancellor. Just when the City had constructed a clear-cut case against tax cuts and a strong one against lower base rates, Germany obligingly cut its own rates and the betting on a corresponding June reduction here has reopened. With luck like that, how can the Chancellor go wrong?

RMC knocks down hopes of building on record profits

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

RMC, the building materials group, announced record profits for 1995 yesterday but gave warning that in the first half of this year profits would be "appreciably below" those of the same period last year.

It said the immediate outlook for the group was affected by weaker demand in Germany, Britain and France, exacerbated by a prolonged and severe winter. Although it hopes for a pick up in housing activity in Britain in the second half, profits look unlikely to match those of 1995.

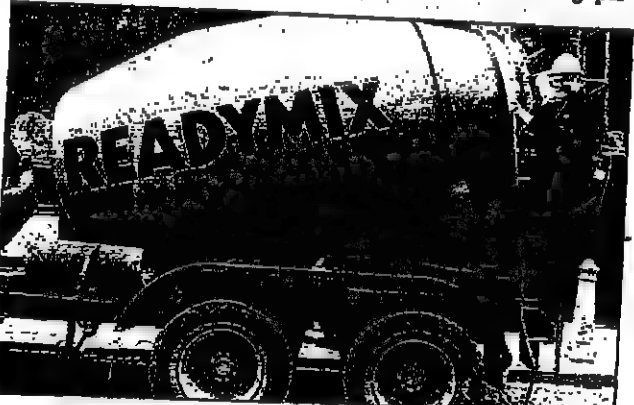
The group made a pre-tax, pre-exceptional profit last year of £329.3 million, up 16.2 per cent. It also made an exceptional profit of £12.4 million on the

disposal of its 25 per cent stake in Lieferbeton, its Austrian subsidiary. It is proposing a full-year dividend of 25.3p, up 10 per cent, with a 17.6p final.

Its shares fell initially on the profit warning but ended virtually unchanged, up 1p at £10.51, recovering after the Bundesbank cut interest rates. Germany accounts for about 50 per cent of RMC's profits.

Peter Young, chief executive, said that the first half of last year was particularly good, but business deteriorated in the second half. "I hope this year ends up as the other way round, with the second half improving on a poor first half," he said.

In Germany, housing per-



Peter Young delivered a warning on profits

mits have fallen 13 per cent, although completions have gone up, suggesting that a dip in housing activity is on the way. The group has refurbished a plant at Rudersdorf, near Berlin, and is confident of cashing in on the commercial and infrastructure building boom as the city prepares to become Germany's capital.

The fall in British building activity in the second half meant cuts in volumes in most product sectors, but cost control and firm margins helped keep profits in line with the second half of 1994.

The group has done well in the US and Israel, with combined profits up 70 per cent last year, and this was seen continuing into 1996. In the US, RMC had record profits in 1995. The group said it is now looking at the possibility of expanding into India and Malaysia. It may also make some add-on acquisitions in markets where it already operates.

By sector, ready mixed concrete and aggregates turnover rose to £2.9 billion (£2.5 billion), with profits rising to £202 million (£178 million). Turnover from cement, lime and concrete products rose to £1.2 billion (£1.1 billion), with profits up to £141 million (£120 million).

Orange shares are squeezed

Orange, the mobile telephone company floated on the London Stock Exchange in March, said yesterday that it had added more than 120,000 new customers since January and now had in excess of 500,000 subscribers. However, the company's shares fell by 24p to 233p.

Last month the company's £2.45 billion share offer was ten times subscribed. The shares were offered at 205p each. The flotation reduced Hutchison Whampoa's stake in the company to 48.22 per cent. British Aerospace has a 21.91 per cent interest.

Niceday sold for £142m

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

WH SMITH has sold its business supplies division to Guilbert, the French office stationery company, for about £142 million cash. The sale is the first result of a company-wide strategic review, expected to be completed at the end of May.

The markets had been speculating on the disposal of Niceday, but not at such a high price, and WH Smith shares closed up 15p at 491p yesterday.

The division, WH Smith Business Supplies, producer of the Niceday brand, is one of

the first half. Bill Cockburn, WH Smith chief executive, said this partly resulted from problems in bringing a hub at Andover on-stream.

He said a stagnant sales position would have meant improving its performance and would have been "a hard slog", but he was sure the French company, with its more international profile, would be able to improve its fortunes. Mr Cockburn said he was very pleased with the price, which he said was based on its potential rather than on its profitability.

McDonnell Douglas rises

McDonnell Douglas, the aerospace and defence group, achieved a 25 per cent rise in first-quarter earnings to \$198 million from \$159 million, helped by a strong performance at its military aircraft subsidiary. Earnings were \$1.78 a share, up from \$1.38.

Total revenues slipped to \$3.2 billion from \$3.3 billion, primarily because of a decrease in deliveries of commercial aircraft. Revenues from commercial aircraft dropped to \$428 million from \$491 million. Revenues from military aircraft rose 6 per cent to \$2 billion.

McDonald's sees another record year

MCDONALD'S CORP, the American fast food company, said it continues to expect another record-breaking year of sales and profits in 1996, in spite of a continued competitive US market. Yesterday McDonald's said first-quarter US operating income dropped 4 per cent to \$299.2 million from \$309.4 million a year ago. US sales in the quarter rose 4 per cent to \$1.05 billion.

Outside the United States, operating income rose 9 per cent to \$314.2 million, including a \$16 million accounting charge, compared with \$288.1 million a year ago. Sales outside America rose 20 per cent to \$1.37 billion.

McDonald's reported earnings for the first quarter of \$0.44 a share, excluding a \$0.02 charge for the accounting change, up from \$0.39.

Healthy outlook for SmithKline

By ERIC REGULY

SMITHKLINE Beecham, the Anglo-American pharmaceuticals and healthcare group, yesterday reported stronger than expected first-quarter results and said that it was on target to meet profit forecasts for the year.

Jan Leschly, chief executive, said: "We are not changing our forecast. We expect to achieve double-digit earnings growth."

In the three months to March 31, SmithKline's pre-tax profits rose 7 per cent to £387 million on turnover that was up 10 per cent to £1.87 billion. Analysts had expected pre-tax profits in the £375-£380 million range. Earnings per share were 9.5p, up 6 per cent.

Mr Leschly said that the success of new products, such as Kytrel, an anti-sickness drug for cancer patients, were behind the company's improved results.

SmithKline also announced that it would start to advertise Nicorette, the first over-the-counter aid to giving up smoking, on American television this week. It is the first campaign of its kind in the United States for more than 20 years.

In the year to December 31, the company reported profits before tax and exceptional items of £1.36 billion, a 7 per cent increase on the previous year. SmithKline's shares closed 18p higher at 676½p.

HoF chief defends choice

By SARAH BAGNALL

BRIAN MCGOWAN, chairman of House of Fraser, yesterday staked his future at the struggling department store group on the success of John Coleman, the newly appointed chief executive who joins at the end of the month.

Mr McGowan, who was responsible for the appointment of Mr Coleman, a former managing director of Texas Homecare, said: "I will have to live or die by this choice." The appointment, announced last week, was greeted with a fall in the share price. Mr Coleman fills the void left vacant by last month's sudden departure of Andrew Jennings, the group's managing director.

Mr McGowan made his remarks as he disclosed a sharp fall in profits at the Dickens & Jones and Army & Navy group, from £28 million to £14.3 million in the year to January 27. This was in line with expectations after a series of profit warnings. Sales from continuing operations fell from £754.7 million to £748.9 million.

The decline in profits reflected a 1.6 per cent fall in the gross margin, which was blamed on an £11 million overhang of old stock and the poor performance of ladies' wear. "We brought the wrong clothes," Mr McGowan said, adding that the buying team has been strengthened.

The dividend, due July 1, was held at 3.8p and is payable out of earnings of 5p a share, down from 6.2p. The shares rose 2p to 174p.

WOOLWICH RECORDS A STRONG FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Addressing the 148th Annual General Meeting of the Woolwich Building Society held yesterday, Chairman, Sir Brian Jenkins reported:

"...a strong financial performance during 1995 despite intense competition in our key markets."

This resulted in:

- RECORD PRE-TAX PROFIT OF £333m
- GENERAL RESERVE INCREASED TO £1.67bn
- ASSETS INCREASED TO £28bn
- REDUCTION IN BAD DEBT PROVISIONS
- UNDERLYING COST TO INCOME RATIO DOWN TO 47.3%, FROM 49.1%

Pointing out that the U.K. housing market had failed to show signs of recovery during the year, Sir Brian referred to gross and net mortgage lending, of £3.1bn and £929m respectively, as a "significant achievement". He drew attention to the diversification strategy undertaken by the Woolwich in recent years, selecting five subsidiaries for special mention:

- WOOLWICH INSURANCE SERVICES (General Insurance)
- WOOLWICH UNIT TRUST MANAGERS (Unit Trusts)
- WOOLWICH PROPERTY SERVICES (Estate Agency)
- BANQUE WOOLWICH (France)
- BANCA WOOLWICH SPA (Italy)

The Woolwich became the first building society to move into the direct provision of insurance services. Increased managed funds from £325m to £410m with 78,000 investors by year end. Introduced 6000 new mortgages creating £310m of gross lending.

With reference to the Society's conversion and flotation, he said:

"The conversion project is progressing well, according to the plan and timetable. We are working closely with the Building Societies Commission and The Bank of England. Conversion will not change the Woolwich's traditional values, as we approach our 150th anniversary. They have provided the foundation of our success and will continue to do so in the years to come. Conversion will provide the means, operational flexibility and structure to advance into a changing world as a strong, independent company serving our millions of customers."

It's good to be with the WOOLWICH

— BUILDING SOCIETY —

Copies of the recently published Report & Accounts, and details of the full range of Woolwich services can be obtained by writing to the Secretary, Woolwich Building Society, Corporate Headquarters, Watling Street, Beresley Heath, Kent DA6 7RL.

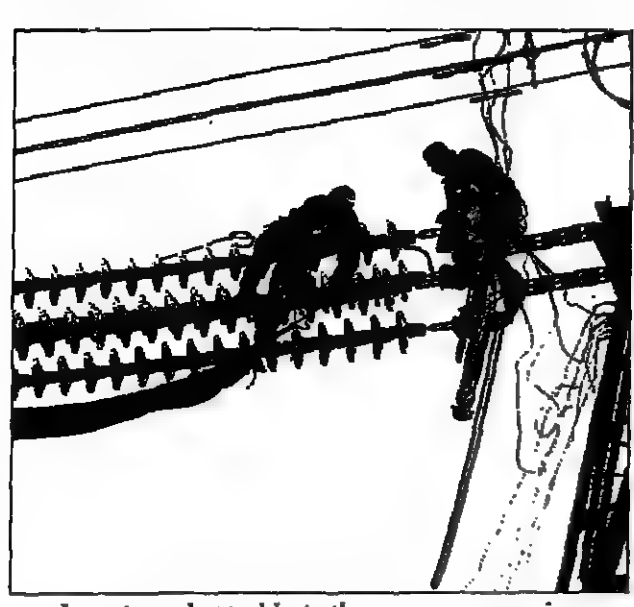


STOCK MARKET MICHAEL CLARK

German rate cut gives shares new lease of life

THE surprise half-point cut in German interest rates steered both K bonds and share prices back on a positive course. Equities had been marked lower at the outset reflecting Wall Street's 70-point fall overnight and continued to lose ground as dealers expressed initial disappointment with the latest inflation numbers.

But the Bundesbank takes pride in wrong-footing financial markets and it will not doubt be especially proud of yesterday's performance. The half-point cut enabled the FT-SE 100 index to reverse a 14-point deficit to end the session 15.1 higher at 3,820.7 with turnover falling just shy of 1 billion shares.



Investors plugged in to the power companies

Sentiment was further bolstered by another flurry of takeover speculation. This time the spotlight focused on Lucas Industries, where the price accelerated 20p to 234p wiping out an 11p fall the previous day prompted by talk of a diesel contract turning sour.

There was talk that Lucas could find itself on the receiving end of a bid from another European automotive components group. There were even suggestions that someone has begun building a stake. Venerable following the decision of George Simpson, chief executive, to join GEC later this year.

Independent distributors stood out with a jump of 28p to 813p with a 1p fall the previous day. Houston Industries, another US utilities group, may have taken a close look at Lucas.

BET fell 2 1/2p to 205 1/2p with more than 37 million shares changing hands after it published its final defence summary. Rentokil, 2p lighter at 234 1/2p, has increased its offer to 217p a share valuing the entire bid at £2.1 billion. Brokers say a Rentokil victory is near.

RMC Group took the edge of another solid performance with a profits warning. It told brokers that profits in the first six months of the year would fall short of the corresponding period. This came as the group unveiled pre-tax profits last year up from £233.3 million to £341.7 million.

Rolls-Royce ended 9p better, at 237p, supported by a buy recommendation from SBC Warburg, the broker. On Monday, a party of analysts began a visit to the group's Allison Engine subsidiary in the US. Brokers say Allison has turned out to be a shrewd purchase.

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pose of a number of the 51 stores in its portfolio.

Full year figures from Laura Ashley, the wallpaper and soft furnishings retailer, rose 10p to 180p as the City decided to throw its weight behind Ann Iveson, the new chief executive. Full-year figures were in line with brokers' forecasts with pre-tax profits up from £3.8 million to £10.3 million. A 2 per cent drop in sales has been more than offset by cost savings.

WH Smith recovered an early fall to close 17p dearer at 491p after confirming plans to sell its business supplies arm to Guilbert, the French stationery office supplier, for £142 million. The money will be used to reduce debt.

Symonds Engineering returned from suspension during the day 10p higher at 71p. The shares were frozen last month pending the acquisition of a printed circuit board manufacturer for £11.5 million. To help finance the deal, Symonds arranged a placing of shares at 51p.

High-flying Metal Bulletin has decided to spend some of its cash pile with the acquisition of a 49 per cent stake in Sea-net for £1.2 million with an option to buy the rest of the company by the year 2003. Sea-net provides information services to the Internet and provides Metal Bulletin with an introduction to the shipping and shipbroking industry. Metal Bulletin closed 30p lower at 930p.

GILTED-EDGED: The cut in German interest rates backed-up by a strong bond market provided fresh impetus to London. It also enabled the Bank to issue further tranches of stock including £200 million of Treasury Index-linked 2 1/2 per cent 2011 and £200 million of Treasury Index-linked 2 1/2 per cent 2024.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt closed £1 1/2 better at £102 1/2 as a total of 67,000 contracts were completed. Among conventional issues Treasury 8 per cent 2015 finished £1 1/2 better at £97 1/2, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was seven ticks firmer at £101 1/2.

NEW YORK: Weaker bond prices did not discourage investors on Wall Street, who continued to be buoyed by good news on earnings. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 10.11 points stronger at 5,560.04.

MAJOR INDICES	
New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	5560.04 (+10.11)
S&P Composite	691.45 (+2.84)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	21812.50 (+137.2)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	10090.29 (+58.48)
Amsterdam:	
EOE Index	543.56 (+1.12)
Sydney:	
ASX	2256.6 (+10.3)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2535.52 (+11.34)
Singapore:	
Strait Times	2387.92 (+15.69)
Brussels:	
General	3035.36 (+18.41)
Paris:	
CAC 40	3085.96 (+10.84)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	779.30 (Same)
London:	
FT 100	3820.7 (+15.1)
FT-SE 100	3820.7 (+15.1)
FT-SE 250	4903.6 (+2.9)
FT-SE 1000	1022.2 (+8.7)
FT-SE Euro Stoxx 100	1699.21 (+0.3)
FT A All-Share	1906.36 (+4.99)
FT Non Financials	2037.94 (+11.9)
FT Flared Interest	111.84 (+0.69)
FT Govt Debt	92.5 (+0.1)
Bulgaria	4073
SEAQ Volume	970.6m
USA (Daxx)	1500.0 (+0.0001)
US\$	2.2793 (+0.0009)
Exchange Index	834 (Same)
Bank of England Official Call	1.1971
ESR	1.0422
RPI	151.5 Mar (2.7%) Jan 1995-100
RPIX	150.9 Mar (2.7%) Jan 1995-100

RECENT ISSUES	
Advent VCT	95
British Smaller Cos	95
Cambridge Wt NV	249 + 4
Cap for Co's VCT (100)	95
Cardcast (85)	95
Clevedon (72)	95
Closed Brokers VCT	95
Dillon Group (270)	320
Easynet Group (100)	97 + 8
FI Group (235)	304 + 2
Gartmore VCT	95
Goldeneye Flight VCT	95
Hill Smi UK Emp Cos	95
Hurlingham Props	95
ILP Group (75)	90 + 2
Orange (205)	233 + 2
Pacific Horizon Writ	17
Penine AIM VCT	95
Quester VCT	95
Raphael Zorn (32)	35
Scottish Asian C	95 + 1
Silver Shield Group (3)	3
Taverners Trust Ltd	514 + 1

RIGHTS ISSUES	
Barrat Dev n/p (200)	77 + 7
Bentley n/p (325)	60 + 1
Estates & Gen n/p (160)	7
Flare n/p (150)	5
Guinness Peat n/p (30)	6
Tepnel Ltd n/p (40)	1 + 1

MAJOR CHANGES	
RISER:	
Micro Focus	1168p (-105p)
Manpower Corp	180p (-20p)
Grassley	134p (-12p)
Lucas	224p (-20p)
Laura Ashley	180p (-16p)
Applied Holo	137p (-12p)
Ranger	300p (-40p)
FALLS:	
Unrel	220p (-16p)
Liberty	373p (-17p)
Metal Bulletin	915p (-50p)
Stagecoach	409p (-11p)
Nat Aust Bank	577p (-10p)
Reed Int	1164p (-20p)
ICI	919p (-13p)

Closing Prices Page 30

TEMPUS Readymixed Germany

GERMAN construction has been a godsend for companies like Redland and RMC. While their domestic businesses struggle with weak housebuilding volumes and cutbacks in government infrastructure programmes, their continental investments made a mint putting roofs over German heads.

The Teutonic housing boom is coming to an end after peaking in 1994. At the same time, an extended winter on the Continent has seriously handicapped the building industry and materials suppliers will struggle to shift all the anticipated volume in the remains of this year.

RMC yesterday played down the volume shippage in readymix in Germany, reckoning that it is only 5 per cent with not a sign of a margin squeeze. Others are less sanguine, predicting a 10 per cent decline, but RMC

reckons Germany will still build more than 500,000 houses this year.

Its readymix business is less exposed to a housing slowdown than products like roof tiles and bricks. RMC's optimism also ignores the risk that Germany's industrial construction could slow as its manufacturers shift production to lower-cost countries.

However, there is no debate about RMC's rising tax charge. Weak volumes will dip slightly this year and earnings will dip slightly, but even when recovery kicks in, higher rates of tax will depress the gains for shareholders.

Yet RMC is a class act among mixed firms: good cash flow and earnings cover three times should enable the company to keep the dividend rising while its robust balance sheet gives scope for aggressive deals in the UK. This is no time to quit RMC.

Laura Ashley is trimming the shop portfolio with the aim of increasing store size. Management have identified that a fifth of UK stores are too small. Meanwhile, expansion in home furnishings should help profits as margins there are better.

Curiously, the new broom has not swept out manufacturing. Instead, the retailer is

reducing costs and will only source fabrics and garments internally when the price is right. If the new boss shows as much talent in selecting product as cutting costs, Laura Ashley will shine again. That question will only be answered when the autumn collection hits the streets but on balance, some optimism is in order.

showing declines while the biggest sales increases came from new products and DPS, the pharmaceutical benefit manager which increased its client coverage by more than 75 per cent.

SmithKline Beecham's poor cash flow remains a puzzle. Drug companies typically throw off masses of money, blessed as they are with high margins and modest capital costs. However, SmithKline never seems to generate much cash from its huge sales: last year the company threw off only £150 million in free cash flow after tax interest and dividends while in the first quarter of this year the company suffered a net cash outflow of £100 million.

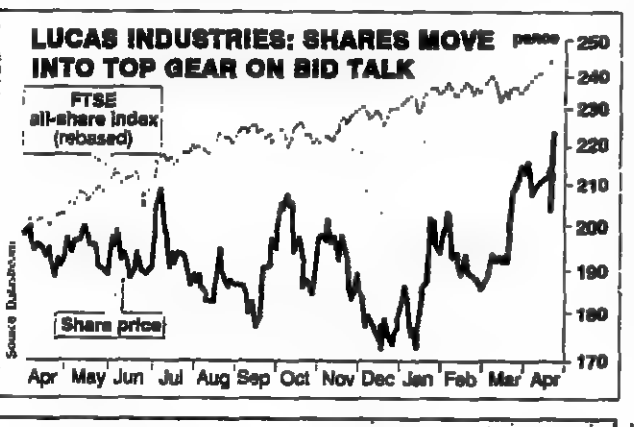
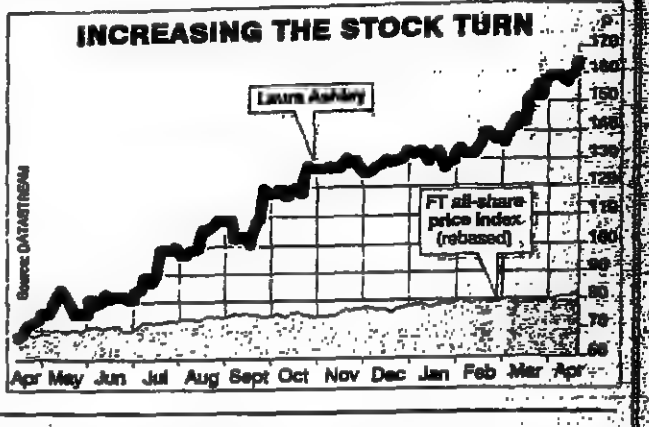
SmithKline ought to be doing better but the market's predictable response to yesterday's figures was pleasure at better than expected drug sales. These were up 6 per cent, twice what many analysts were expecting. Yet the breakdown of the sales also raises questions. SmithKline's big name drugs performed poorly on the whole with sales of Augmentin, Tagamet and the vaccines all

The management has been pilloried for its mistakes, which halved the group's profits. While it may be pointless to dwell on them, the company still fails to demonstrate how it will invigorate a department store chain known best for its cut of season sales.

HoF is taking action, closing down stores with weak sales densities and a new chief executive arrives on the board at the end of the month. Nevertheless there is little evidence at present of a strategy that will convince shoppers that the outlets are more than a place to rummage for bargains.

HoF's share price suggests that the strategy is in place and likely to succeed. That seems premature given that decisions made today will take a long time to hit the shelves. A more probable explanation is bid speculation. There are plenty of cash rich retailers about.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISFIELD



COMMODITIES	
LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE	
COCOA	
May 1996-1997	1040-1077
Jul 1996-1997	1040-1077
Sep 1996-1997	1040-1077
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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Up to the deadline

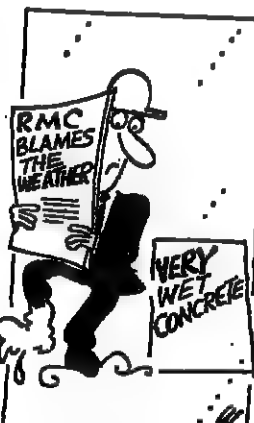
STAFF at *Sunday Business* are determined their paper will hit the newsstands this weekend, in spite of setbacks. The paper which claims it is the target of dirty tricks has been seeking last-minute financial backers, including Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers. By yesterday, the paper had parted company with its original printers, West Ferry and its advertising agency. In addition, the *Sunday Business Post*, based in Dublin, has obtained an injunction preventing the paper publishing in the Irish Republic on the ground that its masthead is too similar to its own. *Sunday Business* has also received legal threats from Reed Elsevier, the publisher, concerning a story in a dummy issue, which claimed Reed was seeking a buyer for its subsidiary, IPC magazines.

American beef

WITNESS the fearsome economic power of Oprah Winfrey, who led a discussion about beef on her TV show this week. Although mad cow disease has not affected herds in the US, as far as anybody knows, Chicago's futures traders took fright at the thought that millions of Americans might have been put off meat. The traders rushed to sell, and the Chicago beef futures market collapsed shortly after the programme went off the air.

In the frame

MIDLAND Bank is spending £2 million on sponsoring ITV dramas, including *Inspector Morse* and *Prime Suspect*. But on the advice of Campaign editor Stefano Hatfield, Midland should beware the runaway plot. "What happens when the storyline is about a small businessman who goes bankrupt and turns to drink or violence... You can see the flashing headlines."



Royal flush

THE chairman of Restorik took time off from his bid for BEP last night. Henry King, also chairman of the GKR Group, was in Leeds at the Royal Armouries Museum to celebrate the headhunters' silver jubilee. The Duke of Westminster, Sir James Glover and Sir Timothy Kitson were among the guests to groan at King's joke: "It's not everyday you have the opportunity to dine with a Duke, two knights... and a king."

Dividing wall

WHEN employees at Hambros Fund Management invited their old colleagues from Hambros Municipal Bank to their new offices at One American Square, they held the party in the basement, which boasts a section of Roman wall. Not quite Chinese walls, but both teams kept well apart.

TONY BLAIR shares a common interest with Philip Yates, who yesterday announced his resignation as managing director and joint head of UK corporate finance at SBC Warburg to join Merrill Lynch as a managing director. Rock kids Blair and Yates are both Oasis fans.

MORAG PRESTON



Ahead of the crowd: Karen Jolley, a children's nanny, moves into the new world of self-scanning at the Safeway supermarket in Camden, London

Supermarket customers check out delights of 'shop and go'

Stealing a march on its rivals, Safeway is offering self-scanning, says Sarah Bagnall

Imagine a world where the weekly food shop is not a Darwinian contest of the fittest that can last hours. Consider the following. The trip starts normally enough. You walk briskly along the supermarket aisles picking up the items of your choice. You have loaded your trolley and then something strange happens. You glance at the long queues moving at a snail's pace, but instead of joining one, you march briskly to a "special" till and, after a momentary pitstop, you sail out of the store.

No tiresome time spent standing in line behind whining children and arguing couples. No labourious packing of your bounty into dozens of plastic bags. No more arriving home to find, in spite of your best endeavours, that your industrial-sized tins of baked beans have squashed your tomatoes to pulp. Overall, a shopper's dream. But this is reality for many customers of Safeway, the supermarket chain owned by Argill Group. In the latest twist in the fierce battle for supremacy among Britain's leading food retailers, it has stolen a march on its competitors by introducing the novel concept of self-scanning in 24 of its 370 stores.

Safeway is conducting the largest experiment of self-scanning in the world. It is the first British retailer to enter the brave new technological world of self-scanning, a process that transforms the shopper into checkout assistant by the simple method of customers passing hand-held bar scanners over their chosen products. The key attraction for the customer is that it basically amounts to approved queue bashing. Henri Henriques, manager of the Safeway store in Camden, London, says: "Take Christmas, which is peak time for us, and the average customer comes to the till with £180 worth of goods. If they used self-scanning it would take them three to four minutes to get through the checkout compared with ten minutes plus if they shopped the normal way." The idea of self-scanning is simple.

Any of Safeway's 3.4 million holders of loyalty cards can arrive at a store and, after a quick swipe of their card, pick up one of 96 scanners from a rack. The scanner, which resembles a new-age phone receiver, is pointed at the desired bunch of grapes, a pot of jam, and the shopper presses a + button. If you decide you no longer want the jam, you rescanned the rejected item and press the minus button.

The scheme is being watched with interest by the City. Tony MacNeary, an analyst at NatWest Securities, says: "Clearly it is an interesting innovation and Safeway have taken the lead in the UK. It could result in improved customer service and reduce labour costs." Mr MacNeary thinks self-scanning could lower the number of staff needed in a store. Safeway, however, is adamant that its introduction will not lead to any job losses.

Dave McCarthy, an analyst at BZW, says self-scanning gives greater flexibility to customers and differentiates the retailer. The latter is an important aspect in the battle for custom. Mr McCarthy adds: "There are several advantages for Safeway, such as it reduces the square footage needed for tills and frees up space." The food retailers have been trying to free up space to enable them to introduce more higher-margin, non-food products, such as videos and clothes.

There are no other comparable systems on trial, but there is a great deal of talk about "entire basket" scanning. This requires a micro chip in every product and therefore is not feasible for low-cost items.

Self-scanning is proving popular with Safeway customers. Mr Henriques says: "In this store, we have more than 5,000 customers who use the self-scanner regularly and we have

only had self-scanning in the store since September." At the Camden store, there are about 29,000 holders of ABC, Safeway's loyalty card, of which about 18 per cent use self-scanning regularly. The percentage has crept up from about 11 per cent when it was introduced and Mr Henriques believes that it will continue to grow. The new system started trials in March 1995 in Safeway's Solihull store, expanding to the other 23 over the course of the year. It has since been modified and branded "shop and go". The group intends to roll self-scanning out into at least a further 30 of its larger stores within the next six months.

On the face of it, self-scanning sounds like a mouth-watering opportunity for shoplifters. Companies such as food retailers are common targets for theft. However, Mr Henriques says shoplifting is not a problem. The ABC cardholders can indulge in self-scanning and, as a result, they have given their name and address to the group. The belief is that not many shoplifters will be willing to divulge such information.

Mr MacNeary says: "In some parts of the country, self-scanning will be an open invitation to theft. However, the fact that to use the system you have to be a cardholder means Safeway can track you down." The other important aspect is that Safeway makes spot checks on self-scanned trolleys.

With "shop and go", the customer knows if his or her trolley needs rescanning only when the scanner has been returned to the rack. This is a recent modification of the scheme as originally shoppers had prior warning of a check. Now, when the scanner is

returned to the handset dispenser a piece of paper is printed out that gives the all-clear or informs the customer they must have their purchases checked for accuracy.

The re-scanning can — and does — show up errors. The most common problem is that children are adept at slipping lollies or crisps into trolleys while their parents are seeking ecologically-sound washing powder.

One benefit of self-scanning is that it has been found to take pressure off traditional tills. Mr Henriques says: "Having self-scanning really reduces the burden on checkouts. I was really worried at Christmas because the store seemed empty and I asked 'are we taking any money guys?'. We took millions. It was a brilliant Christmas." Then there is the added appeal that you don't dump your chosen items unceremoniously to form a tangled, crushed mess in the bottom of a trolley, but pack them neatly into an array of green plastic boxes snugly placed in specially designed trolleys of various shapes and sizes. These boxes, are bought by customers, doing away with the need for plastic bags.

Another attraction of the system is the control it offers customers. There is no need for mathematical gymnastics that invariably produce a total that is at odds with that rung up on the till. Instead, a customer shopping on a tight budget can keep a eye on the running total recorded on the scanner, removing and adding products until achieving the desired effect. Surprisingly, however, Safeway is not seeing any fall in the size of the average shopping basket.

Self-scanning is in its infancy, but the belief is that it is likely to become a major feature in food retailing in the future. As Mr MacNeary says: "If a retailer can get people to use the self-scanning device and can overcome the problem of trust, or tolerate a certain level of abuse, then it could be a successful means of improving customer service."

Kirk O. Hanson on what goes into a social audit

Questions of ethics for Body Shop



Body Shop, with Anita Roddick, was a willing "guinea pig" in the social audit

In the UK and US, the search for a measure to evaluate a company's social contributions has intensified. While politicians have sought the development of a "corporate social audit" or "ethical impact statement" for their own contemporary political purposes, they have embraced a goal that is decades old.

In the late 1960s, American interest in how business contributed to environmental degradation, urban blight and injuries from unsafe products led to calls for corporate social responsibility and the means to measure it. In Western Europe in the 1970s, Labour governments advocated, and occasionally enacted, requirements for "social audits" that documented companies' employment levels, wages and benefits, redundancies and other impacts on worker welfare.

Today, President Clinton, Robert Reich, the American Labour Secretary, and Tony Blair have encouraged discussion of a social or stakeholder audit for roughly the same reason: to create a voluntary standard for social behaviour by private business, knowing major new state initiatives for the control of business are unlikely. The existence of such measures, it is hoped, would set the standard of responsible corporate conduct. The media, in turn, would draw attention to the results, bringing pressure on laggard firms to improve. Mainstream corporate managements are, or ought to be, interested in the social audit for

more practical reasons. Social performance today has profound importance for financial performance. The environmental audit identifies significant future costs of pollution remediation. Poor treatment of local communities, neglect of safety in distant manufacturing facilities, or failure to keep up with benefits that address employees' family needs can identify higher future costs and the risks of costly events. Top performance can indicate lower costs and higher productivity in the future.

In subjecting itself to two social evaluations in the past year, The Body Shop International has made itself a willing "guinea pig" in the development of social auditing. Its internally developed *Values Report*, unveiled in January, focused primarily on dialogues

and surveys that asked stakeholders to rate what they knew of Body Shop's social behaviour. In my *Social Evaluation 1995*, published today, I rate Body Shop's behaviour against a set of comparable companies on 39 dimensions of social performance. I give the company 39 "grades" of one to five stars, three representing performance comparable to other companies and five representing far superior performance.

Practical problems abound in performing a social or stakeholder audit. What are the dimensions of social performance, for example? Everything a company does affects a stakeholder, you might argue, but you cannot report effectively on everything. I started with more than 200 categories of "social" per-

formance, setting aside some because they were not important to this kind of cosmetic and accessories company, adding others because of Body Shop's dealings with independent franchisees worldwide. I combined many measures to keep the total number workable.

What is a social rating? Do you rate a company on some absolute quantitative scale, against some measure of "best practice", against the average behaviour of comparable companies, perhaps against the company's own goals or its claims about its own behaviour? With so few accepted metrics or measure of "best practice", I chose to evaluate the social behaviour against the average behaviour of similar companies.

How much investigation and auditing does one do? As in

financial auditing, one could check every transaction and relationship if given an unlimited budget. I made choices and identified appropriate samples. I examined 15 randomly selected customer complaints, visited 25 stores in the UK and the US and talked to 80 employees. I have undoubtedly missed instances of exemplary and substandard behaviour, but, I believe, I have accurately captured the overall social record of the company.

Finally, who should do a social audit — insiders or an outsider like myself? Can an outsider ever understand the company well enough to draw valid conclusions? Will an audit ever be credible if done by insiders? This year Body Shop commissioned both an outsider audit (mine) and an inside audit, with a form of verification by outsiders.

I believe the social audit will eventually be done much as the financial audit is now done — by insiders with outside attestation that the results present a fair representation of the social performance of the company. But until there are generally accepted measures of social performance or the special impact of companies, an outsider's evaluation may be the only way to get a comprehensive assessment of a company's social performance.

The author is senior lecturer at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business

BUSINESS LETTERS

Two 'wise ones' both right on the course of Britain's recovery

From M. C. Fitzpatrick

Sir, In Janet Bush's *Economic View* (April 11), she sought to test the apparently contradictory views held by two of the Chancellor's "Six Wise Ones". Professor Minford believes that the UK recovery is running out of steam, as companies totter under the involuntary increase in stock built up over the last 18 months. He believes that interest rates need to be cut immediately by 2 per cent in order to sustain the recovery. Professor Congdon sees significant dangers of inflation as consumers go out and spend their tax cuts and building society windfalls; he believes that rates will soon have to move upwards.

Who is right? I believe they both are. Let us look at Professor Minford's views first. Quarterly growth averaged about 0.5 per cent in each of the final three quarters of 1995, with much of even this anaemic growth being driven by stock building. Moving to 1996, the first two quarters are the most arithmetically significant in determining the overall growth in 1996 as compared with 1995 as a whole. It is likely that growth in these two quarters will be adversely affected as companies stabilise stock levels (or, worse still from a growth perspective, reduce stocks). The impact of the stock shakeout in the first two quarters of 1996 will make it very difficult for the economy to grow by more than a 2 per cent in 1996 as compared with 1995 as a whole. This is so even if the increase in consumer spending helps to lift overall growth to (say) 0.8 per cent per quarter in the second half of 1996, after the

stock shakeout has run its course. A cut in rates now would ease the stock shakeout effect, and make it more likely for economic growth in 1996 to exceed 2 per cent; to this extent, Professor Minford is on the right side of the divide.

Let us now turn to Professor Congdon's analysis. Assuming that quarterly growth does accelerate to about 0.8 per cent in the second half of 1996, then by the end of 1996 the economy will be growing above trend and the Government will almost certainly be in danger of not achieving its 2.5 per cent underlying inflation target two years out. By the end of 1996 either rates, or taxes, or both, ought to go up; probably taxes, in order to control the PSBR which is now totally out of control as compared to the figures projected by the Treasury in November 1994. This analysis fits broadly with Professor Congdon's.

In terms of any decisions to be taken by the Chancellor in late 1996, however, a third factor cuts in — electoral timing. At the end of 1996, the Government may believe it has a chance of winning the forthcoming election — it may thus be loath to raise taxes or rates on the eve of the poll. On this basis, Professor Congdon's advice is likely to be ignored.

My conclusion is that Professor Minford is right in the immediate term and Professor Congdon in the medium term; alas, the advice of each is unlikely to be heeded. Yours faithfully, M. C. FITZPATRICK, (Head of Economics) Chantrey Villacourt, 10-12 Russell Square, WC1.

Benefits for the whole economy

From Mr Anthony Werner

Sir, Janet Bush (Windfalls debate) disguises risk to manufacturing jobs, April 11 draws attention to the disarray of economic "experts". She reminds me of a passage in Paul Ormerod's book *The Death of Economics* "Good economists know, from work within their discipline, the foundations of their subject are virtually non-existent."

Lost Prophets by Alfred L. Malabre, an American book, states "a prominent member of the Harvard economics faculty, Robert J. Barro has constructed a so-called misery index, reflecting economic growth, joblessness, unemployment and interest rate levels, and has concluded that misery seems to diminish most pronouncedly when the chairmanship of the (President's Council of Economic Advisers) is held by an economist named 'va-

cancy'." These quotes reinforce the view that economists do not know what they are talking about. A great danger that may have arisen from this, is that the subject of economics is dismissed as valueless. This would be unfortunate. We need to go back to fundamentals, to re-examine, as Adam Smith did, "The nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations". To a classical economist it would be obvious you cannot have a consumer-led recovery while big companies create short-term profits by downsizing. Classical economists understood that the economy is a whole, damage to part of it damages the whole. We need economists to advise governments on policies to benefit the economy as a whole. Yours faithfully, ANTHONY WERNER, 15 Adler Road, SW1.

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GEC wins race for submarine contracts

By Ross Tienan, Industrial Correspondent

THE General Electric Company is to emerge from talks with Rolls-Royce as the prime contractor on a £2.5 billion to £3 billion order to build up to five nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Navy.

The bid battle to build the second batch of Trafalgar class hunter-killer boats was won by a consortium embracing GEC-Marconi, GEC's defence subsidiary, Rolls-Royce and Associates, the nuclear engineer, and Amec, the offshore construction group.

But in spite of Ministry of Defence efforts to persuade Rolls to participate as a prime contractor, the company will leave GEC to take the risks on the fixed-price contract, and accept relegation to the role of

Housing 'locked in long decline'

By Rachel Kelly, Property Correspondent

BRITAIN'S construction industry is locked in a cycle of low investment, low productivity, inadequate training and a lack of innovation, according to a report published yesterday by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The report finds that investment in new houses in the 1990s has fallen to its lowest level since the Second World War, and is far below that of other leading industrialised economies.

Professor Michael Ball, from the South Bank University, who has analysed the results of the three-year research programme, urged the Government to raise the level of investment in subsidised housing and to set more realistic national building targets.

The report found that investment in new house-building has, with the exception of a few short-lived surges, been falling for more than 35 years. Council and other publicly subsidised housebuilding has been drastically curtailed, but housebuilding in the private sector has also declined.

There is a shortage of skilled labour, with training of a lower standard in Britain than in the rest of Europe. The US and The Netherlands produce homes of equivalent quality at far less cost.

Housing and reconstruction: A troubled relationship is published by Michael Ball in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by the Policy Press, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol BS8 4EA; tel: 0117 973 8797.

Property group to raise £25m

By Carl Mortished

CAPITAL and Regional Properties is raising £25 million to fund an expansion of its investment portfolio. The property group, which last month acquired Wood Green Shopping City, north London, for £33 million, is issuing £26 million in 6.75 per cent convertible subordinated unsecured loan stock by way of rights.

Shareholders can subscribe



Ron Zeghibe, Maiden's chief executive, who believes the company is "in pole position" to come to the market

Maiden expects £65m flotation

By Fraser Nelson

THE Maiden Group, Britain's second-largest outdoor poster advertising company, is expected to be capitalised at around £65 million when its shares begin trading on the stock market.

The company, which owns 25,000 advertising panels across Britain, is raising funds to repay debts of around £37 million through a placing of shares sponsored by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Directors are expected to retain a 60 per cent stake in the company and about 25 per cent will be placed with institutional investors. The share price has still to be announced.

Maiden has consistently outperformed the advertising sector since 1993, when the company, which had been owned by the same family since 1925, was the subject of a management buyout.

In 1994, operating profits rose 68 per cent to £3.3 million and increased again to £5.58 million in 1995. Revenue has

City favours Albert Fisher move to shed loss-maker

By Sarah Bagnall

ALBERT FISHER saw its shares edge higher yesterday in spite of news of a £42.8 million restructuring that pushed the food-processing and distribution group into the red in the six months to February 29.

The shares rose 2 1/2p to 48 1/2p. City analysts reacted favourably to the news of the restructuring, arguing it would unlock value for shareholders and ensure future earnings growth.

The exceptional charge turned a pre-tax profit of £12.6 million into a loss of £24 million. The charge covers the cost of withdrawal from its wholesale produce business in Germany, which has been loss-making for the past two years.



Stephen Walls: US talks

Stephen Walls, chairman, said the closure had been prompted by a structural change in the market, which had reduced food retailers' requirement for external dis-

tributors. He also said the group was in talks to dispose of most of its US distribution business, which has an annual turnover of about £40 million. It is expected to be sold at a substantial premium to the net book value of about \$55 million.

The underlying performance of the group was welcomed by the City. The continuing operations lifted operating profits by 33 per cent to £27.8 million on sales ahead 15 per cent at £778 million. The group's European fresh produce, European food processing, seafood and North American produce divisions each managed to lift profits. The dividend, due July 10, is maintained at 1.85p. Underlying earnings per share fell from 1.95p to 1.87p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

French Connection to resume payouts

FRENCH CONNECTION, the fashion retailer, saw profits halved to £3.4 million from £6.86 million because of difficult trading conditions in Europe and America in 1995. However, the group said that after a break of five years, it intends to pay a dividend of 2p per share. David Bernstein, chairman, said the group had had a "reasonable start to the year". He described last year as "a setback". Turnover was static at £70.7 million, compared with £70.5 million.

In America, operating profits were down from £3.2 million to £1 million. French operations incurred a loss of £200,000. In the UK, wholesale profits were £1.7 million, compared with £2.4 million, while retail profits were down to £200,000 from £600,000. Earnings fell to 10p from 23.2p a share.

Wolseley raising £64m

WOLSELEY, the plumbing materials group, is raising £64.4 million via a share placing to finance acquisitions. The company has spent £68 million on the purchase of 17 businesses during this financial year and continues to explore opportunities for acquisitions. A total of £58 million was spent on acquisitions in the previous year. Wolseley said 14.1 million new shares were being placed with institutions through SBC Warburg at 460p a share. Existing shares fell 6p to 470p.

Cairn Energy expands

CAIRN ENERGY, the independent oil and gas company, lifted net income to £8.9 million from £5 million in 1995, completing a year of intense corporate activity. The company acquired Holland Sea Search Holdings for £17.9 million and a 10 per cent interest in the North Sea Gryphon field for £35.8 million and sold its holding in CEUSA for £13.7 million. Average production rose to 5,843 barrels of oil equivalent per day from 4,927 boepd. There is again no dividend.

AIM hits target early

THE Alternative Investment Market for smaller companies has exceeded its initial target, of attracting 140 companies within its first year, nearly two months ahead of schedule, the London Stock Exchange said yesterday. Launched in June 1995, AIM has seen more than two billion shares traded, equating to more than £692 million. AIM companies have raised £243 million of new capital. The number of market-makers trading in AIM shares has risen to nine from three.

WEW incurs £3.4m loss

WEW GROUP, the discount retailer, is again passing the interim dividend after incurring losses of £3.45 million before tax in the 26 weeks to February 3, compared with profits of £5.81 million in the first half of the previous year. Losses were 2.44p a share, against earnings of 2.41p. Turnover fell 7 per cent to £67.5 million and was 14 per cent lower on a like-for-like basis. The decline in turnover has been arrested and the second half is expected to produce a modest pre-tax profit.

ERA dividends resume

ERA GROUP, the retailer and distributor whose subsidiaries include Beattie's model and hobby shops, is resuming dividends in spite of a fall in pre-tax profits to £1 million in 1995 from £1.3 million in the previous year. Earnings were 0.44p a share, down from 0.62p. The company said results were affected by lack of consumer confidence, exacerbated by hot weather in the summer and early autumn. Trading has made a strong start this year. The final dividend is 0.1p a share.

BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL
(IN LIQUIDATION)

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR THE ATTENTION OF FORMER EMPLOYEES, THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND DEPENDANTS

To all individuals who may be or may become interested as beneficiaries in any assets subject to the trusts of the ICIC Staff Benefit Trust and/or the BCCI Staff Benefit Trust ("the Trusts"). Such individuals ("the scheme members") comprise principally any past or present directors, officers and employees of BCCI Holdings (Luxembourg) SA and of any of its subsidiary or associated or affiliated companies (including Bank of Credit and Commerce International S.A. and Bank of Credit and Commerce International (Overseas) Limited) and the dependants and family members of such individuals.

Hearings will be held (1) in the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands commencing on 27 May 1996; and (2) in the High Court in London commencing on 4 June 1996 at which orders will be sought binding all scheme members to a settlement of litigation in the Cayman Islands and England and of other matters relating to the Trusts.

The main issues in the litigation, to which some of the scheme members are parties, concern the validity of the Trusts and alleged breaches of trust by the principal BCCI and ICIC Companies in particular in relation to a subvention payment of US\$150 million made in 1985. The proposed settlement is conditional on the Courts making Orders binding all scheme members to its terms whether or not they are parties to the litigation. Certain scheme members have been appointed by the Courts to represent the interests of all scheme members who are not themselves parties to the litigation.

As part of the proposed settlement, an appeal in the Luxembourg Courts brought by former BCCI employees, including members of the BCCI Campaign Committee, challenging the proposed agreement between the BCCI Liquidators and the Abu Dhabi Government has been withdrawn.

The principal terms of the proposed settlement are:

1. The release of all claims (including counterclaims) by the scheme members which they have or may have in connection with or arising out of the Trusts and discontinuance of the litigation.
2. The payment of US\$50 million to a new Trust to be held by independent trustees (whose appointment is to be approved by the Courts) on behalf of the scheme members in accordance with the terms of a Trust Deed to be approved by the Courts.
3. A third party has agreed to pay US\$20 million to an entirely new Trust to be held by an independent trustee (whose appointment is to be approved by the Courts) for the purposes of assisting in the repayment or settlement of staff loans to employees or former employees.
4. No person will be entitled to receive sums under the new Trusts (1) unless they release all other claims they may have against the principal BCCI and ICIC Companies other than claims as genuine commercial depositors or creditors and (2) to the extent that they are determined to have been guilty of any fraudulent or criminal act or omission in relation to the principal BCCI or ICIC Companies.

Certain outstanding issues relating to the settlement will also be dealt with at the Court hearings. Each scheme member has a right to apply to appear at the Court hearings. Any scheme member who requires further information or intends to appear at such hearings should contact (i) Manches & Co at Aldwych House, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4RP or Hellewell Buryard at 6, Highbury Corner, London N5 1RD (solicitors for the Plaintiffs in the English litigation) or (ii) the Liquidators at BCCI SA (in liquidation), Citadel House, 5-11 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1BR or (iii) Finers at 179 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6LS.

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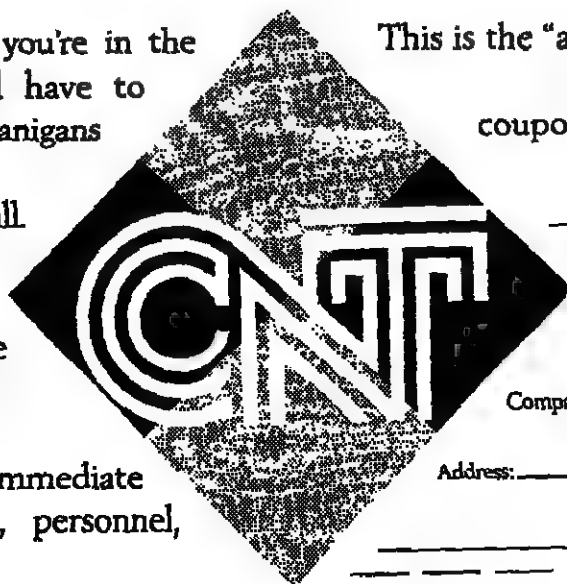
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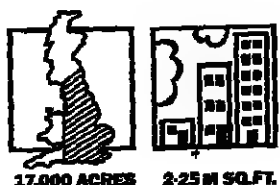
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Business is on the move: **David Crawford** looks at the relocation industry and **Craig Seton** examines the economic regeneration of Britain

We want to export yashmaks — traditional headgear — to the Middle East. Let's make them in Greater Manchester. That was the thinking of Sutton Vale plc, a Saudi-owned company. It recognised what Andrew Fraser, chief executive of the Government's Invest in Britain Bureau, calls the "fundamental advantages" of the UK as a location.

Competitive land prices and a skilled workforce are key factors cited by manufacturers such as Sutton Vale. For the fast-expanding international call centres it is the indigenous telecoms infrastructure and language capabilities that count; while for international banking and other invisibles it is what Mr Fraser regards as the "stature" of the City as well as of Britain's financial, legal and other services.

With nearly 4,000 American companies, 1,000 from Germany, and more than 1,200 from France now sited in the UK and producing some 40 per cent of our exports and 24 per cent of net output, Britain is proving attractive to new inward investors from South-East Asian economies.

Taiwanese cathode-ray tube manufacturer Chunghwa Picture Tube's £260 million investment at Mossend in Strathclyde was won against strong competition from mainland Europe. It will create 3,300 jobs in a former steel area when completed in the year 2000 — more than any previous inward investment in UK history.

But looking after established investors is equally important, says Mr Fraser. He estimates that 60 per cent of future new investment will be from companies already operating in the UK or, just as significantly, their suppliers.

A prime example of this latter growth phenomenon is the decision in March by three Korean electrical engineering concerns, Poong Jeon, Fine Electromechanics and Sun Kwang Electromechanics, to set up in South Yorkshire's Dearne Valley Enterprise Zone, which was established last November. This is the first time so many companies from the same overseas country have simultaneously located at a single British site.

Even one of the less obvious UK regions for manufacturing

Where to park your business



Come on in, the water's lovely: Sherwood Park, a new business park sited in an enterprise zone next to the M1 in Nottinghamshire, where going to work is a pleasure

investment, Devon and Cornwall, has recently succeeded in attracting some high-profile inward investors. Including Finnish laboratory goods producer Biotit and New York-based linear motion systems specialist Thomson Industries. Biotit first entered the UK

with a sales office in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, in 1992 and will now export its pipettes direct from Paignton to Africa, the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent, as well as developing more local markets for its product.

The geographical spread of

inward investments emphasises the fact that, for overseas companies, the key choice is typically between national economies, with the precise regional location often a secondary consideration.

A key niche market, for example, is for call centres,

which provide customer support in fields such as banking, software, travel and tourism. Among recent additions to the UK's 5,000 companies offering telemarketing services is the Atlanta-based United Parcel Service, which has opened a customer-service telephone

centre in Nottingham as part of an £800 million European development programme.

Domestic relocations, by contrast, are proving much more location-specific. UK companies are reflecting what Jones Lang Wootton, who have monitored decentralisa-

tion trends since 1979, expect to be continuing uncertainty over "the future competitiveness of both manufacturing and service industries".

The post-recession reduction in property cost differentials between London and the regions has reduced the need

to move long distances. More than 80 per cent of major moves out of Central London between 1995 and 1997 will involve relocating to other areas of Greater London and the South East, generally to purpose-designed accommodation or pre-lets in the case of larger organisations.

Motivated partly by social policy considerations, the public sector continues to display the most active commitment to regionalisation — often at the expense of fringe Central London districts such as Victoria and Southwark — with nearly three quarters of all its moves directed to locations outside the South East.

The South West has proved particularly popular, as it has with financial and professional services. The region scores because of its environmental attractions and accessibility to centres such as Swindon, Bristol and even Cardiff.

All this means more specialised work for the relocation consultants, whose trade body, the Association of Relocation Agents, marks its tenth anniversary in May, a sign of maturity for this relatively new business-support service.

The billions of pounds of inward investment into England over the past decade can largely be attributed to an infrastructure of national, regional and local agencies involved in economic regeneration, **Craig Seton** writes.

Government-sponsored regional development organisations and the national agencies — English Partnerships and the Commission for the New Towns — play vital roles in attracting overseas investment to advantageous locations and, increasingly, in the decisions by foreign firms to reinvest in existing operations.

Working with urban development corporations, local authorities, government departments and others involved in economic development, and backed by incentive packages, they have reaped rich rewards.

English Partnerships has played an important part in

Why multinationals feel at home in the country

the £450 million multi-product complex in Cleveland, Teesside, by Korean firm Samsung Electronics, as well as in Ford's choice of Birmingham for the production of a new Jaguar X200 model, and in the announcement by Siemens that North Tyneside would be the site for a £1.1 billion microchip plant employing 1,800.

The English Partnerships' remit is to reclaim and develop vacant, derelict and under-used sites for inward investment. It acts as an enabler to forge public and private-sector partnerships. One of its key schemes is a venture with Kodak at Sherwood Park, a new business park in an enterprise zone

adjacent to the M1 in Nottinghamshire.

The Commission for the New Towns is responsible for disposing of the assets of the former development corporations in 21 English new towns. It owns and manages 16,000 acres of land for industrial and residential development and 6 million sq ft of industrial and commercial premises, together worth £1.2 billion.

It owns some of the largest strategic development sites in England, including the 470-acre Omega site in Warrington, Cheshire. Its property portfolio in Telford, Shropshire, the centre for more than 130 overseas firms, is the biggest in one

location in the West Midlands.

Europe and the United States own the majority of 1,300 overseas firms in the North West, with more recent arrivals from Japan and Taiwan. INWARD, the regional development organisation, and The Mersey Partnership, a marketing agency for the sub-region, are two of the main economic drivers in an industrialised region where firms such as Kodak, Siemens and Vauxhall have made significant reinvestment decisions.

Repeat investment has also become a key factor for economic regeneration in the West Midlands: it is estimated that more than half of the

record £1.25 billion of overseas money ploughed into the region in the last full year was repeat investment.

Fujitsu Falcum Telecommunications' decision to stay in Birmingham on a new site at Arlington's Birmingham Business Park, and Jaguar's plans to expand its Castle Bromwich plant are crucial in a part of England where foreign investment has restored thousands of jobs lost in traditional industries.

As reinvestment becomes more common, there are moves to ensure it continues. The Northern Development Company for the North East, INWARD, the West Midlands Development Agency and others have created "aftercare" services to encourage expansion among inward investment companies. The Invest in Britain Bureau, the national Government-backed agency, is also helping reinvestment in the regions.

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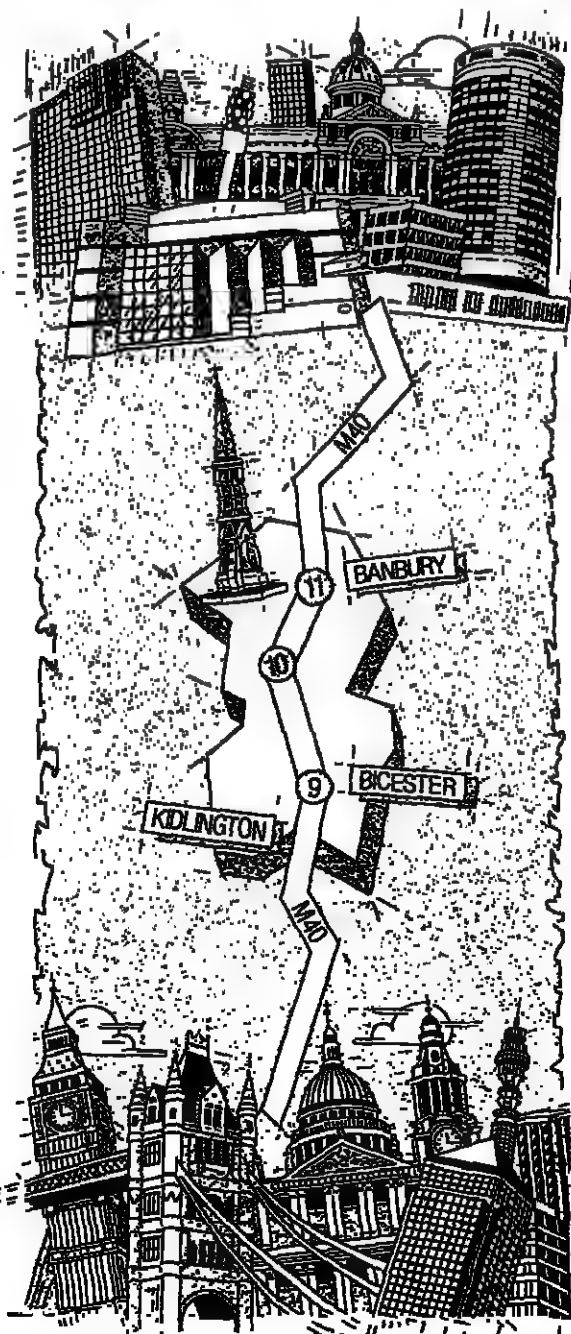
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Spotlight on the regional relocation, expansion and new technology that is bringing employment growth across the United Kingdom

Ten thousand new jobs were created in Wales in 1995-96 as overseas companies invested more than £500 million in the principality, *Iola Smith writes*. These figures are 50 per cent up on 1994-95, indicating that Wales is back in a dominant position in the relocation stakes.

"This was the high point of the decade so far," says James Turner, head of Inward Investment at the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). "We made breakthroughs in new markets and saw many resident companies embarking on major expansions."

One of those new markets is Korea. In February Wales welcomed the Korean-owned company Halla which unveiled a £17 million investment that will create 300 new jobs in Merthyr Tydfil. The company will produce forklift trucks, mechanical diggers and other earthmoving equipment for the European market.

David Rowe-Beddoe, WDA chairman, says the investment is good news for Wales as a whole. "The company wants to source as many components as possible locally. That means there will be a substantial number of additional jobs created indirectly at companies which will supply the Merthyr plant."

The principality is currently being considered as a business location by Lucky Goldstar, the Korean electronics company. The firm is seeking to construct a semi-conductor

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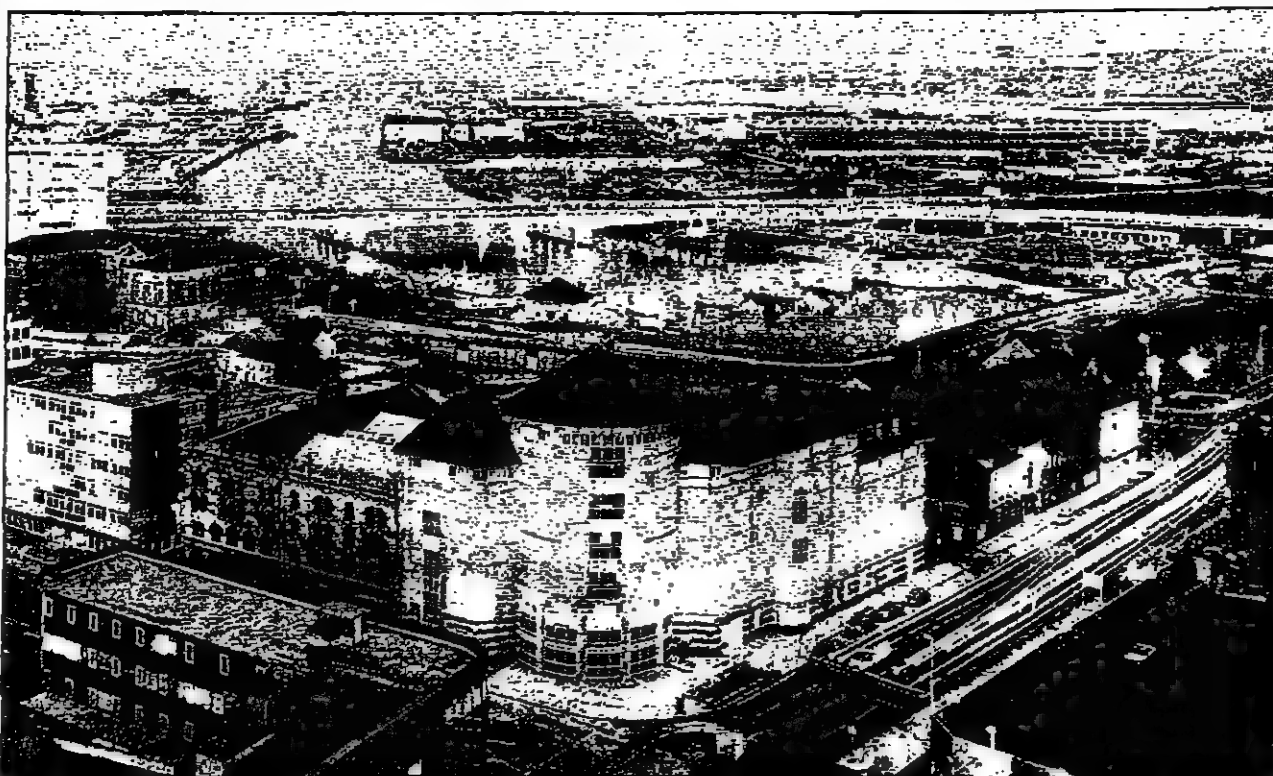
plant in Europe, and if Wales wins the multi-million pound investment it will obtain 3,000 new jobs.

Europe's leading producer of silicon wafers is already in residence and last month the company, Wafertec of Newport, owned by the Hong Kong firm QPL International Holdings, launched a £230 million expansion programme.

Microchip manufacturing equipment is also produced in Newport by the Japanese-owned Sumitomo Corporation. Back in February it announced a £5 million expansion which will create 100 jobs. Earlier in the year Mid Wales welcomed its first direct Japanese investment. Plastics manufacturer Shimizu of Nagoya moved to Newtown to make automotive components. The £5 million investment creating 45 jobs is a breakthrough for rural areas, which are now being increasingly recognised as viable locations for inward investors.

Companies from the rest of the UK, particularly in the financial services sector, are also relocating to Wales. South Wales's Financial Services Initiative intends to create 10,000 jobs by the millennium. Last month alone more than 500 jobs were announced as organisations as diverse as insurance companies and the Bank of England moved in.

Switched on for a far brighter future



Belfast at dusk: a £130 million job-boosting development is under way beside the River Lagan in the city centre

The momentum of change which quickened in Northern Ireland during the terrorist ceasefire continues undaunted, *Ronald Faux writes*. The province is pushing ahead with schemes to create new jobs, a strong economy and an attractive environment as weapons against the threatened return to a so-called "armed struggle".

A symbol of this absolute determination to achieve physical and economic renewal that could do much to heal

NORTHERN IRELAND

historic divisions is the £130 million development under way beside the River Lagan in central Belfast.

Helped by funding from Europe, the 15 acres at Lagan are being transformed by the Laganbank Corporation from being a home to the city's markets into a prestigious centre for commerce and leisure.

A £39 million waterfront concert hall and conference

centre seating 2,250 is scheduled to open next January. Adjoining it will be a £19-million Hilton International hotel scheduled to open in the spring of 1998.

Barry Gilligan, chief executive of Ewart, the property investment and development company of which the Laganbank Development Company is a subsidiary, said: "We are very, very positive about this project and will

continue to be so. A number of the commitments to Belfast were made by companies long before the ceasefire and significant interest has been expressed in the past six to 12 months. We do not see that there is a problem."

The construction of the £14-million Lagan Weir sealed a permanent stretch of waterway beside the city centre in place of the mudbanks and river that alternated with the tide. Riverside walkways are now designed to stretch from the Belfast harbour area to the Lagan Valley regional park. The impact of improvement is already attracting fresh inward investment.

London United — the London First Centre's new umbrella initiative — aims to take advantage of the capital's increasingly diversifying local economies, *David Crawford writes*. Martyn Lewis, LFC director of London Business Services, says: "The better local areas are organised to receive inward investment, and to recognise investors' needs, the better London as a whole will perform in the international arena."

London United aims to coordinate the efforts of the capital's "stakeholders" — the boroughs, chambers of commerce and training and enterprise councils, the DTI's new Business Link and successful ventures such as the Hounslow Initiative and the Park Royal Partnership.

When Lloyd's Register of Shipping looked like relocating out of the City, LFC brought in the City Corporation to negotiate a development deal under which LRS is building a new 260,000 sq ft HQ in Fenchurch Street, safeguarding 1,200 existing jobs and creating 400 new ones.

Another welcome boost has come from the opening in January of Delta Airlines' new 230 million European Reservation Sales Centre at Park Royal, London's largest business park with more than 17 million sq ft of commercial space on 1,500 acres.

LONDON

guarding 1,200 existing jobs and creating 400 new ones. Of the 33 companies the London First Centre has relocated to the capital since its establishment in April 1994, eight have gone to the western "wedge" along the strategic corridor between the Docklands/City/West End core and Heathrow airport.

The most significant investment to date is by the Korean conglomerate Samsung, which is abandoning Frankfurt to build a 100,000 sq ft European HQ and staff training complex on a nine-acre site on the Great West Road in Hounslow and will employ at least 500 people when this is completed in 2000.

Another welcome boost has come from the opening in January of Delta Airlines' new 230 million European Reservation Sales Centre at Park Royal, London's largest business park with more than 17 million sq ft of commercial space on 1,500 acres.

SCOTLAND

Scotland has long had an inward investment organisation which other regions of the UK have reason to envy. Last year it attracted £1.127 billion and helped to create or safeguard a record 12,329 jobs, *Ronald Faux writes*.

Heading the list of 97 projects was the £260-million Chunghwa Picture Tubes plant at Mossend, Lanarkshire, which will bring work for 3,300 and represents the biggest single inward investment project in UK history coming to a community devastated by the closure of the Ravenscraig steel works.

George Kynoch, Scottish Office industry minister, said the scale and significance of the plant, which would serve the whole European market, were such that it would bring major benefits not just to Lanarkshire but the Scottish and UK economies. Securing the Taiwanese company was a major success

for Locate in Scotland (LIS), operated jointly between the Scottish Office and Scottish Enterprise, to market Scotland abroad. It has led Scotland away from the labour-intensive heavy industry that made Clydeside the workshop of the Empire into a strong position as a European springboard for the new technologies of the second industrial revolution.

Further investments, not handled by LIS, accounted for a further 33 projects involving 2,738 jobs safeguarded or created. For example, Shin-Etsu Handotai Europe, the world's largest producer of silicon wafers, announced a £160 million investment programme in Livingston, West Lothian; Lexmark International of Lexington, Kentucky, chose Rosyth for a £26 million facility to manufacture ink cartridges for computer printers, and expansion of the Motorola plant near Bathgate, making cellular telephones, will create a further 500 jobs.



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Out with steel, in with freight

Corby's new Eurohub terminal is well placed to exploit the Channel Tunnel, reports Craig Seton

A bold new dimension has been added to the growing diversity of Corby's economic base with the opening of Eurohub, a 300-acre international road and rail freight delivery, distribution and collection complex with direct railway connections to the Channel Tunnel.

The new centre occupies the former steelworks site in the Northamptonshire town. The site was closed in 1974 by British Steel, and the massive job losses that ensued inspired a home-grown campaign of industrial rejuvenation. This has attracted 750 companies and about £1.1 billion of private sector investment, created 14,000 jobs and restored Corby as a powerful economic base. Eurohub is the latest product of the strategy.

The first of the terminal's new occupants, Gefco UK, a specialist distribution company within the PSA Peugeot Citroën Group, has started importing cars through the Channel Tunnel and officially opens its facility today. Autolink, a joint venture between the vehicle distribution and logistics companies, Walon UK and French-owned STVA, is soon to begin.

Eurohub took seven years to plan and prepare, and has involved a partnership between Corby borough council, King's Park Developments of Solihull, and British Steel, which retains a tube-making operation in the town. An estimated 2,000 jobs could be

supported once the complex is fully occupied.

Eurohub was designed to capitalise on the vast tract of brownfield land left from steel-making, together with its array of rail sidings and a spur line, which is still in use by British Steel, to the connection to the Channel Tunnel.

Another key advantage is the town's central location between the M1 motorway and A1 arterial route. These are intersected by the new A14 east-west carriageway near Corby.

'Our depth of crisis meant radical measures were needed'

About 150 acres of land on the site are still available for further development. Hopes are high that large manufacturers may be attracted by the proximity of the dedicated distribution facilities, according to John Hill, Corby's director of industry and head of the council-funded Industrial Development Centre that was set up in the 1980s to halt the progress of the town's economic decline.

Mr Hill says that once the steelworks — Corby's largest employer — had gone, the town immediately sought innovative ways to create new

jobs in a diverse range of industrial and commercial sectors. "It was the depth of the crisis Corby faced that made people decide that really radical measures were needed."

The main aim was to attract inward investors and, once they had arrived, to help them to grow. The campaign has to date achieved remarkable results. Some of the firms that began operations in the 1980s are now in their second, third and even fourth stages of reinvestment.

Mr Hill points out that while Corby continues to operate a simplified planning regime to ease the progress of new developments, the success of its revival over the years has meant the loss of other grants and aid packages that were previously available through having assisted-area and enterprise-zone status.

The town now has to go it alone in the important phase of economic development that Eurohub represents. The target is to help Corby to grow by 20 per cent in new jobs, population and social provision by the year 2006.

Mr Hill says that Corby has created for itself an "ethos of development", and describes Eurohub as an important indicator to potential inward investors that Corby can produce fresh ideas for economic development. "We are providing something new that is an extra dimension to the Corby economy, something that sets us out as a rare place for business to thrive."



From brownfield site to European transport hub, Corby has capitalised on its assets



On the right track for the Continent

The first scheduled import-export car-carrying services begin through the Channel Tunnel today, and they are headed for Corby, writes Craig Seton.

A 62-acre regional distribution centre being officially opened today on Corby's Eurohub site by Gefco UK will act as a railhead to import Peugeot and Citroën cars into the Midlands via the tunnel.

The opening of the £12.5 million facility marks the start of scheduled services through the tunnel by car-carrying trains. These will be up to 23 wagons long and will access Corby's site through a rail link from Corby to the main London to East Midlands railway line.

Gefco has space to store up to 10,000 cars. Vehicles are loaded on to a computerised stock-management system and, after pre-inspection, they are sent out by transporters for delivery to dealerships in the Midlands.

New marshalling yards at the facility are the first private tracks to be added to the stock of Railtrack, which has also provided dedicated signalling for the Eurohub development.

Gefco eventually plans to use the centre for exporting to the Continent Peugeot cars made in Coventry.

Jacques Pietrzak, manager of Gefco UK's automotive logistics division, says: "Our Corby facility is an essential element in the overall vehicle storage and distribution strategy we are developing for the Peugeot Motor Company and Citroën UK."

A second large railhead terminal for vehicle distribution at Eurohub is the result of a joint venture between Walon UK and STVA of France, a vehicle logistics group closely linked with SNCF, the French national railway company. The 43-acre site has space for up to 10,000 vehicles and other land available for expansion.

Autolink, the joint-venture company, plans to construct a purpose-built centre for the pre-delivery inspection and preparation of vehicles ready for dealers' forecourts. Due to start operations soon, the computerised terminal will use the Channel Tunnel rail link to import and export cars.

Walon is part of the French-owned Walon Group, which operates in ten countries as an automotive distribution and logistics company with a fleet of 1,800 transporters.

In a pilot operation in February, a train arrived at the site via the Channel Tunnel carrying 180 cars direct from the Fiat factory in Turin, northern Italy. The journey, which took 36 hours, usually takes up to seven days by sea.

Walon is negotiating with several large European car manufacturers with a view to them using the Corby site for vehicle deliveries throughout the UK. Tim Barber, Walon's UK commercial director, says: "Autolink is ideal for exporting or importing on a just-in-time basis, in line with the pan-European logistics strategies of car manufacturers."

Wincanton Distribution, a subsidiary of Unigate, is investing £16 million in facilities at Eurohub, including a 250,000 sq ft complex for the distribution of pet foods to the national and international markets under a contract with Mars GB.

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Westabix, Golden Wonder, Oxford University Press, ABR Foods, Avon Cosmetics, Astra Pharmaceuticals, Ranks Hovis McDougall and Willett International are also based locally. About 40 of Corby's companies are from overseas, including Japan, the United States and Germany.

Today two thirds of the workforce is employed in manufacturing industry, three times the national average. Unemployment at 6 per cent is also below the national figure and a far cry from the grim days following the steel industry's decline in 1979 when the number of men without jobs reached 35 per cent.

Corby has had a simplified planning zone since 1988. The designation covers about 450 acres of prime development land where planning consent for certain industrial and commercial projects is effectively automatic.

There are about 1,500 acres of land for economic development, the majority controlled either by the borough council or British Steel. Facilities include prepared and serviced sites, and offices, business and warehouse units.

The Commission for the New Towns is marketing industrial land for about £75,000 an acre. Ron Jamieson, deputy regional director, says businesses appreciate the advantages of Corby as a business location. "We believe the bulk of new business will come through expanding local occupiers and from regional firms that appreciate the competitive land prices in the town."

Corby's population of about 55,000 is scheduled to grow by about a fifth over the next decade.

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EDUCATION

Standards in schools: the great debate

Gillian Shephard,
the Secretary of
State, claims
the Government's
education policies
are bearing fruit

I have always felt that we, as a nation, paid too little attention to educational issues. This is thankfully no longer true. They are now one of the main topics of interest and debate throughout the country. Most recently Sir Claus Moser has set out a "programme of priorities" for education which will make a significant contribution to the debate.

This growth of interest is much due to the Government's concern for educational issues and particularly for standards. Since we took office in 1979 we have put in place a series of measures to raise standards — involving structures, processes, content and quality control.

We now have a rich diversity of schools — grammar, church, LEA, grant-maintained, educating three-quarters of a million pupils, city technology colleges and, most recently, specialist schools (we now have more than 150 of these).

Parents have been given choice between these schools and the right to receive the information which enables them to make that choice on an informed basis.

This restructuring is fundamental because choice and diversity in themselves help to raise standards.

We deal with the essential content of education — what is actually taught in schools — by introducing the national curriculum. For the first time, we have defined what children ought to know at certain ages.

Quality control is ensured by testing at 7, 11 and 14 — checking that subjects are being taught properly and that children are making progress. And quality is further enhanced by the schools inspectorate, Ofsted, set up in 1992. We are now in the middle of a programme which aims to inspect every primary and secondary school in a four-year cycle.

Much has been done. But we know that standards are not yet high enough — through testing and inspection we now have real evidence, a basis on which to put things right. Inspection has shown



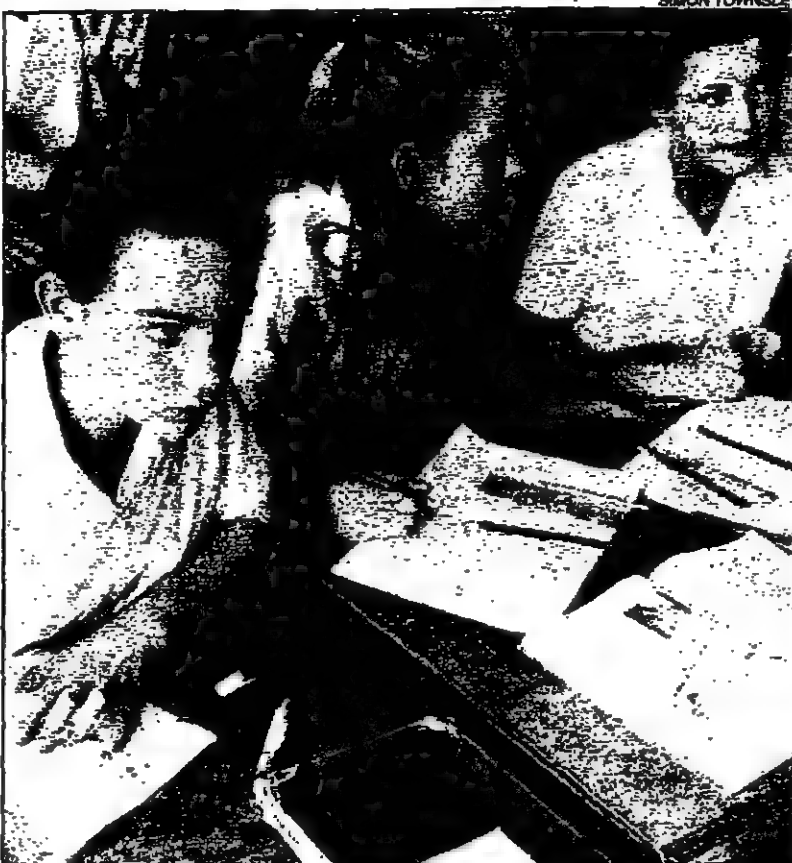
Gillian Shephard, left, insists that educational standards will improve but Sir Claus Moser is critical of the "disgraceful" problems of illiteracy and innumeracy

that one in five lessons and some 15,000 teachers are unsatisfactory. Evidence from the OECD shows that although we are ahead in some respects — having, for example, the second highest graduation rate in Europe — in other areas we are behind our competitors, participation at post-16, for example.

Since I have been at the Department my overriding priority has been to continue to drive up standards, working on all fronts: structure, process, content and quality control. The tests have shown, for example, that we need to focus even more sharply on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. So the revised curriculum, which I brought in last year, does just that. We are making the curriculum and tests more rigorous and from September 1997 we will have a nationwide network of 25 literacy and numeracy centres, dealing with local schools to improve the basic skills.

This approach applies throughout the age range. The new nursery initiative, which started this week, will, in time, give every four-year-old the right to good quality publicly funded nursery education with parental choice at its centre.

MARK ELLIDGE



SIMON TOWNLEY

Rigour and excellence are being reinforced throughout the system. Sir Ron Dearing's review of 16 to 19-year-olds' education will strengthen the A-level examination; our recent substantial expansion of the Assisted Places Scheme provides another 4,000 places in excellent schools for children who would otherwise not have this opportunity.

Nothing is more fundamental to raising standards than high quality teaching. We have defined the skills and knowledge we expect from all new teachers. Ofsted and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), established in 1994, are drawing up a quality framework to judge training courses against those outcomes. Ofsted will report publicly on the standards of training — and the TTA is following up those reports. Funding is now linked to quality — and poor providers may lose their right to train teachers. Good ones will be able to expand.

These measures are raising the standards of the 20,000 or so new entrants to teaching each year — but we also have a raft of measures to help our 400,000 serving teachers to give of their best. From now

on inspectors will report particularly good or bad teaching to head teachers, to help them to identify their schools' strengths and weaknesses. Good performance can thus be recognised, and teachers who need help identified. The TTA is making sure that the £400 million spent each year on in-service training is correctly targeted.

The ultimate success of any organisation depends on the quality of its head. Teaching is no exception. That is why I have introduced a new National Professional Qualification for Headteachers. This will do much to raise the quality of headship. The recent Ofsted report on target-setting illustrated how many schools have improved by setting themselves targets. We will build on that and encourage more schools to use target-setting, benchmarking and other good management practices.

This is not glamorous or eye-catching. It is hard slog. But it is the way to win the battle for higher standards, and that we are determined to do. Indeed we have no choice. Higher standards are essential, not only for the success and fulfilment of the individual, but also for the competitiveness of the nation.

A study out this week says the reforms have failed. David Charter reports

An important American study of the school system published this week concluded that the Government's education reforms had largely failed to raise standards in the classroom.

The Carnegie Foundation found no clear evidence of improvements since the national curriculum was introduced in 1988, although it said the recently slimmed-down version "has a good chance of success".

It also warned American policymakers against the idea of grant-maintained status for schools because it risked a fragmented, two-tier education system.

The report came in the week that another broadside was fired at the Government's record in education by Sir Claus Moser, founder of the National Commission on Education. In a speech at the Royal Society of Arts, he criticised the "serious and disgraceful" problems of illiteracy and innumeracy, as well as "appalling school conditions in which so many children spend their lives".

Sir Claus concluded that standards had fallen further since he called in 1990 for a Royal Commission on education because of a crisis over achievement.

If anything, the Carnegie Foundation report is more optimistic. Kathryn Stearns, a senior analyst at the foundation, spent several months visiting schools and interviewing teachers, administrators and education experts for the 94-page report, *School Reform: Lessons from England*.

She concluded: "There is little evidence that the national curriculum, local management, grant-maintained schools and school choice have significantly raised standards." The rapid pace of change in England, which brought turmoil to schools and a teacher boycott of tests, should serve as "warning bell" for the United States.

There was, however, praise for the way greater control over budgets was given to head teachers and governors. "Schools generally

appear cleaner and brighter than before the introduction of local management, because refurbishments are not delayed.

However, the full handover of financial control to grant-maintained schools was criticised. "Autonomy has its merits, but schools serve the public best when they collaborate within a regional system dedicated to a common purpose." The movement of grant-maintained schools to introduce selection or other restrictive enrolment policies was likely to lead to a "two-tier system of best and second-best".

The report said that wider consultation with parents and teachers before the Education Reform Act of 1988 would have prevented the enormous waste of money and time on an initially unpopular and over-prescriptive national curriculum. The mistake cost the Government time, trust, and considerable sums of money.

Despite the reduction of the curriculum's content last year, the report found there was still too little time for English and mathematics at primary schools.

Although "stark differences" in achievement at similar schools had not yet been eradicated, there were now new signs that the curriculum was beginning to have a positive effect. The curriculum had been used as a national discussion document which had led to a close examination of teachers' approach and what students ought to know. "This impromptu exercise has been invaluable," said the report. "Against all odds, the curriculum seems to be succeeding."

The doctrine of parental choice came in for particular criticism in the study. Ms Stearns said: "England's Conservative Party extols the power of parents to choose their children's schools. But the reality is somewhat different from the rhetoric. Most students continue to attend their local neighbourhood schools."

A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Employment said it did not use the term parental choice but talked of parental preference. "We realise people may not get their first choice but the reforms have introduced the fact that parents can make a preference which they could not before."

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education and Employment Secretary, said: "This report highlights the need for a coherent partnership approach towards raising standards in the future which this Government has failed to do."

JULIAN HERBERT

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A lesson in role-playing: speech and drama classes allow pupils to be someone else while keeping their own identity

We all know that young people have plenty to say. But do they need the help of Trevor McDonald and the Better English Campaign to say it? All the students I questioned this week were able to tell me what they would spend a lottery fortune on. Money, they believe, would give them the chance to have the life they want. They can all talk eagerly about this, yet what they do not accept is that the words they use can also provide them with opportunities in life. So how do we create language fever?

As I walked into my classroom last Monday morning and listened to conversations about football, weekend activities, computer software and a whole range of other interests, I knew that what I was working with was a highly articulate group of people. All of them communicated extremely effectively and there were certainly no grunts. To the outsider, however, these are probably the very students who are seen to be disadvantaged.

What about their use of spoken standard English? Can the same students who are discussing Newcastle United's title chances use standard forms in different situations? Are these skills that we need to be teaching? Standard English is a valuable addition, not a replacement for students' own language and every student should have access to it.

How do we create a fever for language?

Ruth Moore says drama could be the key to the Better English Campaign

Teachers have always recognised this and drama, which allows students to be someone else while keeping their own identity, is a perfect way of doing it. During a recent drama project on homelessness, my students had to role-play a formal public meeting concerning the building of a shelter in a residential area. Every student in the class had a different role and confidently used an appropriate variety of English. Students in Blyth achieve high standards of oral work and are certainly capable of using spoken standard English.

If young people are sophisticated language users, why are they not being seen to use standard forms in situations where it might be appropriate? The key to this is ownership. We all need to feel as if we own our own language.

If we return to the conversa-

politicians. Now, thankfully, it is an issue and the move towards inclusion is one that we can all support.

The Better English Campaign can do a lot to promote the benefits of using effective English, but we must recognise it as part of a much wider aim. People spend money on the lottery because they have a chance, however small, of winning. When young people believe that there is a society out there that they can be part of, a chance of success, they too will hold on to the use of spoken standard English.

A few weeks ago I returned to school after an operation. A 14-year-old boy stopped me in the corridor to ask if his class would be having drama again. When I said they would be, I was met with the "don-standard": "Agh mint, Miss." It may be argued that the student should have said, "That is very good Miss Moore", but I know which version made me feel most welcome to be back. If politicians questioned honestly which response they would prefer to have to their policies, we might all come to a better understanding of the real power that language has.

Ruth Moore is Second in English at Blyth Ridley High School, Northumberland. Chairwoman of NATE (North East Association for the Teaching of English) and a member of the Better English Campaign steering group, writing here independently.

CLIVE DAVIS

Why buy a new car? Why buy a new house? Why buy a new car? Why buy a new house? Why buy a new car? Why buy a new house?

plucked from the well-deserved obscurity of New York's public access cable channels. Discovered by a researcher on James's BBC

album is already available. The woman seems likely to be with us for some time yet. A dreary prospect? You bet your sweet potatoes, honey.

As time goes by, the similarly urbane treatment, Riddle finding infinite varia-

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Year projected indicators at:	10%	5%
Year 1: 1995-1996	112% + 1/4	145
Year 2: 1996-1997	113% + 1/2	240
Year 3: 1997-1998	114% + 3/4	330
Year 4: 1998-1999	115% + 1	420
Year 5: 1999-2000	116% + 1 1/4	510
Year 6: 2000-2001	117% + 1 1/2	600
Year 7: 2001-2002	118% + 1 3/4	690
Year 8: 2002-2003	119% + 1 1/2	780
Year 9: 2003-2004	120% + 1 1/4	870
Year 10: 2004-2005	121% + 1 1/2	960
Year 11: 2005-2006	122% + 1 3/4	1050
Year 12: 2006-2007	123% + 1 1/2	1140
Year 13: 2007-2008	124% + 1 1/4	1230
Year 14: 2008-2009	125% + 1 1/2	1320
Year 15: 2009-2010	126% + 1 3/4	1410
Year 16: 2010-2011	127% + 1 1/2	1500
Year 17: 2011-2012	128% + 1 1/4	1590
Year 18: 2012-2013	129% + 1 1/2	1680
Year 19: 2013-2014	130% + 1 3/4	1770
Year 20: 2014-2015	131% + 1 1/2	1860
Year 21: 2015-2016	132% + 1 1/4	1950
Year 22: 2016-2017	133% + 1 1/2	2040
Year 23: 2017-2018	134% + 1 3/4	2130
Year 24: 2018-2019	135% + 1 1/2	2220
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Year 26: 2020-2021	137% + 1 1/2	2400
Year 27: 2021-2022	138% + 1 3/4	2490
Year 28: 2022-2023	139% + 1 1/2	2580
Year 29: 2023-2024	140% + 1 1/4	2670
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Year 31: 2025-2026	142% + 1 3/4	2850
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Year 33: 2027-2028	144% + 1 1/4	3030
Year 34: 2028-2029	145% + 1 1/2	3120
Year 35: 2029-2030	146% + 1 3/4	3210
Year 36: 2030-2031	147% + 1 1/2	3300
Year 37: 2031-2032	148% + 1 1/4	3390
Year 38: 2032-2033	149% + 1 1/2	3480
Year 39: 2033-2034	150% + 1 3/4	3570
Year 40: 2034-2035	151% + 1 1/2	3660
Year 41: 2035-2036	152% + 1 1/4	3750
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Year 51: 2045-2046	162% + 1 3/4	4650
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Year 71: 2065-2066	182% + 1 3/4	6450
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Year 73: 2067-2068	184% + 1 1/4	6630
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Year 75: 2069-2070	186% + 1 3/4	6810
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179	68	Lead Earth	169	-	1	2.8
177	122	Pring Fly Ute	169	-	4	2.4
167	143	French Conn	165	-	14	1.8
166	190	Pring Frog	135	-	1	6.7
162	175	Green	81	-	1	3.1
160	200	Adelphi	61	+	1	2.0
159	651	Adelphi	734	+	13	2.8
158	381	Hudson	248	-	1	1.6
157	381	Hudson	100	-	1	2.6
156	152	Hudson	174	+	2	4.0
151	49	Hop (T)	96	+	1	6.0
147	125	Interstate	174	+	1	1.3
146	170	Lead	685	-	5	1.7
145	194	Blackburn	280	-	4	2.5
143	166	Kingsbury	243	+	8	1.5

	470	125	Mitsubishi Corp.	189	+ 29	
	115	90	Old English Pub	110	-	1.1
	445	325	Pet City	363	---	
	592	524	Southern News	562	---	2.4
	86	80	Southern Vectra	89	---	
	250	122	Surrey Fr Invest	210	+ 10	1.2
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Source: Fiscal

① US\$
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③ Figures or report available

④ Ex dividend
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⑥ Not significant

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Time to dispel England's lofty outlook on Europe

The Rugby Football Union should, with due modesty, consider modifying its grandiloquent name. To be styled the English Rugby Football Union would not only be more accurate but might also persuade its members and executive to view the rugby world from a less self-admiringly exalted position.

In the past 12 months, its high-handed behaviour has contrived to muster embarrassment over its captain, Will Carling, a mood of attrition among its own clubs and a lofty attitude to the European Cup.

As if this were not enough, it is now threatening to destroy the international structure of the European game. It is time

that it came down from the clouds.

At the precise moment that the southern hemisphere countries — Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa — are about to fulfill their long-standing dream and embark on an annual tournament that they envisage as their own version of the five nations' tournament, the northern hemisphere countries, perversely, are tearing themselves apart.

To put the five nations' event in jeopardy, as England have conspired to do by wishing to negotiate their own television contract, is plainly obnoxious. England, seduced by the bitch goddess — success — are claiming that she favours

them more than others. Success is a fickle mistress, as Wales will willingly warn them: she winks one moment, turns her back the next.

It is for each union to determine what happens within its jurisdiction. The television contract, however, is different. What is for sale is not the space on a country's jersey or around the perimeter of the pitch. Indeed, it is not like one-off matches that England, as with non-five nations' contests, are entitled to package, sell and promote independently.

What is on offer is the five nations' championship. It is the championship in its entirety that is the so-called product, not any one game or any



GERALD DAVIES

Rugby Commentary

single country within it. In other words, a series of ten matches between five countries spread over a period of two months. For this to succeed, the agreement of every one is required. Take any one away and it becomes a thing deformed.

To invoke the independence of France is somewhat disingenuous for there are very obvious cultural, legal and historical differences. At any

rate, a full consortium of a five nations' television negotiating committee, not four, as was the case in the past, is already in place. Apparently France believe they will benefit more, financially, from being on the inside, not the outside.

England may very well care to think of themselves as the most significant of the constituent nations, but they would be misguided if they did. The championship would be the

poorer for the absence of England but no more so than if any of the other nations were absent. This is the peculiar historical nature of the contest. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Nurturing a glorious and prestigious competition may now count for naught in the greedy chase for squalid cash. And what cash is there for England? Were they to be in the very regrettable position of being expelled from the championship, who would they play?

Might they replace these fixtures with one or two against the southern hemisphere nations before Christmas and further home and away matches against France,

who might still decide to exert their independence in the new year?

Playing other European countries, such as Spain or Romania, to make up a compendium of haphazard fixtures is hardly likely to entice the television companies or fill Twickenham.

These matches would have their own inherent interest but they could not possibly replace the cumulative tension and the swelling tide of the European championship. England cannot do without the championship just as the championship cannot do without England. There are no winners here.

England say they have a greater number of clubs to administer in comparison

with, for example, Wales and Ireland. The population of these countries is the equivalent of New Zealand's, but would England dare present the same argument for a greater share of the spoils were New Zealand to be a part of such a tournament?

In the Tri-Series about to start in the southern hemisphere, the contract negotiated last year ensures that each country has an equal share of the proceeds, no matter that Australia has fewer clubs and players than both the other nations.

The five nations' championship is the jewel in the crown, as all the nations agree. England must surely see that it cannot be sold off in parts.

Duo develop taste for Cannes greens

FROM MEL WEBB IN CANNES

ABSOLUTELY no luck of the Irish went the way of a couple of players from the Emerald Isle in the first round of the Cannes Open yesterday. Not that they needed any: they played the sort of golf in which good fortune is an unnecessary luxury.

A long day in the sun was still young when Paul McGinley, the first of them, stroled off the 18th green at Royal Mougins wearing the small smile of a man who has just visited the well and found it brimming over with vintage champagne.

With just one bogey on his card to preserve due humility, McGinley had scored 65, six under par, to share second place with Philip Walton, his compatriot, and Peter Mitchell, from Kent, a stroke behind Fernando Roca, of Spain, whose 64 equalled the course record. To say that he was pleased was to understate the case by a factor of about ten.

"I played beautifully," McGinley said, with the slightly immodest but understandable honesty that is born of a job done just about perfectly. "I putted well, which was the key, and my course management was really good. I never got out of position, kept giving myself chances, and the putting took care of the rest." It did, too. The greens at Royal Mougins are heavily,

occasionally grotesquely, contoured — Mark Roe, ever the man for the succinct one-liner, said it looked as if the course builders had buried elephants under them — but McGinley made them look like he was putting on a snooker table.

He lost no time in getting into his stride with birdies on the first two holes. On the 1st, he hit a nine-iron to six feet and confidently rolled in the putt. He did not make such a good job of his seven-iron

turn. He concluded the entertainment for the day with his final birdie on the par-five 15th.

McGinley had not long left the scene before he was joined on 65 by Walton, who is almost certainly the best injured Irish professional golfer on the Côte d'Azur this week.

Walton is among the growing number of players to use the broomhandle putter, which is rapidly reducing to a nonsense the claim by golfing traditionalists that it is an instrument of the devil. On this day it looked more like a magic wand as he, too, holed putts from all over the place. Not bad for a man with an aching right big toe.

Walton was not sure what the injury to the offending digit was. He thought it might be rheumatism; it could even, heaven forbid, be gout, although he claimed not to have touched a drop of the hard stuff for a fortnight or more.

All Walton knew was that it had hurt enough for him to have dunked it in ice for 90 minutes the previous evening and put two painkillers on the menu at breakfast time. Six birdies, no bogeys and 18 greens hit in regulation were his reward — if he goes on like this for three more days, he could make a seriously troubling big toe something that no ambitious golfer should be without.

SCORES

EARLY FIRST-ROUND LEADERS (65 and 66 under par): P. Roca (64), P. Mitchell, P. McGinley, P. Walton, 65; R. Russell, 67; M. Turner, 68; J. Clarke, 69; R. Russell, 70; D. Carter, J. Sargent (Swi), R. Chapman, J. Pinner, M. Ferry (Fr), R. Dinsdale, C. Post (Den), 71; G. Turner (NZ), A. O'Connor, P. J. Johnson (Swi), J. Noyan, A. Colson, R. Jacquelin (Fr), G. Orr, P. Eaves, O. Edmond (Fr), J. P. Hery (Bel), 72; G. Brand, J. C. Casar (Fr), J. Wether, 73; J. Van de Velde (Fr), J. Richardson, G. Dabson (Fr), D. A. Russell.

approach on the next, but neither did he make a tiny drama into a crisis, holeing from 30 feet. Golf a difficult game? Not when it is played like this.

A five-iron to five feet at the 6th brought him another birdie, and three putts for a bogey on the 9th represented his sole error on the greens. There were further gains on the 10th and 12th, and a 35-footer at the 14th maintained the momen-



Rhodri Donovan puts at the 3rd in the Peter McEvoy Trophy at Copt Heath yesterday. In high winds, Mark Pilkington, the Welsh boy champion, took the title. Scores, page 44

Faultless Skelton has plenty in reserve

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR IN GENEVA

NICK SKELTON, of Great Britain, who attempts a second successive Volvo World Cup win this week, had a timely morale booster when he and his reserve horse, Cathleen, won the Prix du Rhone, the second warm-up class of the five-day meeting here.

Skelton was invited to take over the ride on Cathleen, formerly ridden by Meredith Michaels, of the United States, last October. After good performances in Stuttgart and Bremen in the autumn, Skelton decided to ride her in the Dutch World Cup qualifier in 's-Herengroen last month and finished in sixteenth place.

"She's got all the scope in the world and a lovely temperament," Skelton said after his win. There was little to fault in the manner of her victory. Despite the disadvantage of being drawn first in the seven-horse jump-off, she jumped fast and clear over the six fences in 40.39sec.

Only one rider, McLain Ward, of the United States, on Avalon, was faster, but the young American incurred four faults at the end of the course and had to settle for second place. None of the remaining five riders — including Franke Smoot, the world champion from Germany, on Very — could match Skelton.

Later, Skelton and John Whitaker, the only other Briton here, were out of luck in the Prix du Jura, a power and speed competition. The event won by Ludovic Philippaerts, of Belgium, involved two parts. Riders had to be clear over the bigger, first half of the course in order to go on to the timed second half.

Cathleen, faultless over the first half, just clipped the third fence of the timed section after running on too freely off the corner. Whitaker, unusually, was eliminated after his new horse, Amadeus — an 11-year-old, Dutch-bred gelding — took exception to fence four, a rail following a bank, and nothing Whitaker did would persuade him to jump.

RESULTS: Prix du Rhone: 1, Cathleen (N. Skelton, GB) 40.39sec; 2, Avalon (M. Ward, USA) 41.28sec; 3, San Patrignano (V. F. Smoot, GB) 41.40sec; 4, P. du Jura: 1, Ludovic Philippaerts (Bel) 37.28sec; 2, San Patrignano (V. F. Smoot, GB) 37.28sec; 3, Gysmar (L. F. Smoot, GB) 37.28sec.

Hall rallies to reach last eight

DARREN HALL, the former European badminton champion, came from a game and 14-11 down, saving two match points, to reach the quarter-finals of the European championships in Herning, Denmark, yesterday with a 9-15, 17-14, 15-8 victory over Chris Bruil, of Holland.

Peter Knowles, the England No. 2, also reached the quarter-finals, overcoming Pierre Pellegren, of Holland, 15-8, 15-13 and performing more effectively than the night before, when he had been within two points of defeat against Richard Vaughan, the schoolboy from Wales, who looked a bright Olympic prospect for 2000.

Atlanta bound

Rowing: The Amateur Rowing Association yesterday announced the pre-selection of six oarsmen for the Olympic Games in Atlanta. They are: Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, the Olympic champions, in the coxless pairs, and Rupert Obholzer, Tim Foster and the Searle brothers in the coxless fours. Redgrave and Pinsent remain unbeaten since the last Olympic Games while the coxless four achieved bronze and silver medals respectively in the world championships of 1994 and 1995.

Caps of peace

Rugby Union: The Irish Rugby Football Union is expected to confirm today that caps will be awarded for the "peace international" against the Barbarians at Lansdowne Road on May 18, an initiative of two former players, Hugo MacNeill and Trevor Ringland. Proceeds will go to Co-Operation North/Co-Operation Ireland and the Ireland Fund. Francois Pienaar, the South Africa captain, has agreed to lead the Barbarians for the match.

Rusedski out

Tennis: Greg Rusedski, of Great Britain, bowed out of the Japan Open in Tokyo yesterday, losing in the third round to the third seed, Thomas Enqvist. The Swede, winner of the Indian Open last week, reached the quarter-finals with a 7-6, 6-1 victory over the No 13 seed.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Most beginners' courses start with constructive bidding, i.e. opening the bidding and responding. They then move on to various aspects of card-play. Somehow, the principles of competitive bidding, i.e. bidding once the opponents have opened, seem to get lost.

The main reason for opening the bidding at the one level is to find your side's best contract. Once the opponents have opened, the emphasis shifts and possible reasons for bidding multiply:

1. To find your side's best contract — as before, this reason may still be valid if you have good values.

2. To make life difficult for the opponents: to prevent them from finding their own best contract at no real cost to your side. The more bidding space you can take from them, the more likely you are to achieve this objective.

3. To help partner with his opening lead.

So an overall should be made (a) on a good hand, or (b) at a level that removes some bidding space, or (c) on a good suit. Bearing this in mind, what would you bid on the following hands after your right-hand opponent (RHO) opens One Heart at Game All?

- (i) ♠ KQ1086
♥ 8
♦ Q763
♣ 764

- (ii) ♠ K984
♥ AQ5
♦ QJ975
♣ 3

(i) Pass. Although most tournament players would overcall on this hand, it is more risky at rubber bridge, where partner is likely to expect more values. You are not taking any bidding space from your opponents and, if they finish in a heart contract, you will be on lead yourself.

(ii) Pass. Neither of your suits are good enough to overcall. You should nearly always have a six-card suit to overcall in a minor at the two level. Good distribution is more important than high-card points. Perhaps you will be able to make a take-out double of clubs on the next round.

What would you bid on the same hands after your (RHO) opens One Club when he is vulnerable and you are not?

(i) One Spade. Although there is still the chance that your rubber-partner will play you for more, there are too many bridge advantages in bidding for you to pass. As well as possible advantages in bidding space, you may help your partner by depriving the opponents of bidding space or no-trumps. Also, partner with the opening lead against hearts or no-trumps. Also, the favourable vulnerability means that you may find a profitable sacrifice.

(ii) Double. Your diamond suit is strong enough for a one-level overcall, but it is better to tell partner of your support for all the other suits by making a take-out double.

For details of *The Times* Midland Private Banking National Bridge Challenge, contact the event organisers on 0181-942 9506 or write to: Britannic Building, Beverley Way, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PH or fax to: 0181-942 9569

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

British success

Demetrios Agnos, the London international master, scored a fine result against a field studded with grandmasters in the tournament at Karditsa, Greece. Agnos totalled six out of nine for a share of first prize and, in so doing, played some brilliant attacking chess, as in the following example:

White: Demetrios Agnos
Black: Spiridon Skembris
Karditsa, Greece, March 1996

Ruy Lopez		Karditsa, Final Candidate	
1 ♠4	♠5	1 ♠4	♠5
2 ♠3	♠6	2 ♠3	♠6
3 ♠5	♠7	3 ♠5	♠7
4 ♠6	♠8	4 ♠6	♠8
5 ♠7	♠9	5 ♠7	♠9
6 ♠8	♠10	6 ♠8	♠10
7 ♠9	♠11	7 ♠9	♠11
8 ♠10	♠12	8 ♠10	♠12
9 ♠11	♠13	9 ♠11	♠13
10 ♠12	♠14	10 ♠12	♠14
11 ♠13	♠15	11 ♠13	♠15
12 ♠14	♠16	12 ♠14	♠16
13 ♠15	♠17	13 ♠15	♠17
14 ♠16	♠18	14 ♠16	♠18
15 ♠17	♠19	15 ♠17	♠19
16 ♠18	♠20	16 ♠18	♠20
17 ♠19	♠21	17 ♠19	♠21
18 ♠20	♠22	18 ♠20	♠22
19 ♠21	♠23	19 ♠21	♠23
20 ♠22	♠24	20 ♠22	♠24

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

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James and son supply enterprising fare

ROBBIE and Mark James, back-markers in the Father and Son Fourstones Tournament at West Hill, Surrey, stormed through two more rounds of golf yesterday to reach the semi-finals at their first attempt (John Hennessy writes). Playing off a combined handicap of six, they beat the Boxalls, of Blackmoor, 5 and 4 and, in the afternoon, the Smiths, of Surbiton, 3 and 2.

Against the Smiths, they struck immediately with two superb shots against the wind to six feet at the 355-yard 1st. It was a daunting start for the Smiths, but somehow they held on to remain one down at the turn. However, at the next

hole the Smiths, needing a ten-foot putt to square the match, took not one more but two and were never again a competitive force.

The Jameses, of whom the father is secretary of the Walton Heath club, now face the Hickeys, of the home club. Hickey Sr surrendered the lead against the Taggarts, from Wilderness, with a topped tee-shot at the 17th, but his counterpart did the same off the next tee and then failed with a five-foot putt that would have taken the match to extra holes.

In the second semi-final, the Figgotts, of Littlehampton and Pervale, meet the Walkers, of Woking.

St Helens, their fellow finalists and unbeaten in eight games, narrowly withstood the Bulls' second-half charge last Sunday, and to follow one Stones Super League defeat, albeit encouraging, with another at Central Park tonight, would present Bradford with an obvious psychological handicap.

A further incentive for St Helens was provided yesterday when the Rugby Football League disciplinary committee imposed a one-match ban on Vila Matautia, the forward dismissed for elbowing a Bradford opponent, which ensures his availability for the final.

Jason Robinson, the Great Britain wing who has signed a four-year, £1.1 million deal to move to the Australian Rugby League next year, has asked Wigan for a transfer. "His request will be considered. We want him to stay, but need to reach a compromise," Jack Robinson, the Wigan chairman, said.

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THE NEW RENAULT MEGANE — IT TALKS YOUR LANGUAGE —

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

It isn't only the budget that's unrealistic

The pleasure of sporting production economics may be made. Ellington (ITV) compulsive viewing. Watching the plot unfold each week is like monitoring a worried skink on an office outing, dipping a hand into a pocket occasionally (Here, no, let me), but then simply taking it out again when the danger has passed. I have rarely seen a prime-time drama as cheap as *Ellington*. Which is a shame, since the protagonist is supposedly a big-time sports promoter, in a world awash with cash.

"I'll have a champagne cocktail," he says at Langan's (Langan's is given a very big plug in return for the location). "Make that two," says his companion. But they do not settle to a fabulous lunch, of course; the next shot shows Ellington standing up to go, and saying "Mm, that was nice," like a child at a toy's tea party where nothing has been served.

but everybody has chewed air rather solemnly. After ordering the drinks, you can imagine Ellington running after the waiter and saying: "You did know we were just pretending about the champagne cocktails, didn't you?" It's all like that, just pretending. No, I'm quite happy with this glass of water, thanks. Night scenes in *Ellington* are filmed in daylight, a so-called tennis star is never seen to hit a ball (someone must have checked the price of body doubles), and Mark Cox is flattered into appearing on screen ("Mark Cox?" "The Mark Cox?" says everybody), but is not asked to strike a ball either, because that would presumably entail a higher rate.

Viewers can be quite charitable about such details, if they can believe in the big story. But *Ellington* expects us to accept too many impossible things—such as, that a sports promoter would drop his young tennis star (and call the

cops) at the first sign that she has engineered her own stalker, for publicity. I mean to say, what? "You should have played by the rules, Julie," he barks, and reaches for the phone. "Police?" he says. The viewer has time only to think, "Hang on. Would he? Doesn't he? Wouldn't it be more interesting if before the show is over and the tennis girl is history."

A story of more complex ethics unfolded in *Reputations* (BBC2) which this week examined the last Shah of Iran. Tim Kirby's well illustrated film depicted this man as a self-styled visionary king who had no idea his people didn't like him; who refused to believe that he resented his Western notions of progress, growing up in the shadow of his ruthless father, Reza Khan, he lacked the requisite self himself, and so at key moments hesitated to run away rather than attack his own

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

people. Such an analysis did not quite account for everything, but it was certainly generous and humanising. It seemed to be saying that the Shah did his best, and that the tragedy of his failed kingship was his own. Alongside Shakespeare's Richard II at least.

Because it's true that the Shah believed in a very unfashionable idea: the divine right of kings. How interesting if that idea had been explored, if only for its poetic appeal. Instead we were shown an unfinished statue outside the Shah's palace: two massive bronze legs, severed at the thigh, part of a projected monument to Reza Khan. It was a fabulous image, much more compelling than toppled statues of jumped-up bureaucrats in Red Square. Yet it was left to the viewer to make the connection with Shelley's *Ozymandias*, with its vast and trunkless legs of stone ("Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair").

Unlike to be popular in Iran, this *Reputations* was a stimulating film about grand impractical ideas of leadership. As Iran's economy prospered, the Shah assumed his people would just be happier and happier. Clips showed Westernised Iranian women buying Mary Quant make-up, the Shah went skiing, the dour black and white film turned to glitzy colour; Orson Welles did

voice-overs for state occasions. What more could those Iranians possibly want? That was the mystery to the Shah, and to be honest, it remained a bit of a mystery last night.

Now what's this? A horse in a car? A doggie's wedding? A pig in a stars-and-stripes hat? Why, it must be *ITV's* much heralded *Hollywood Pests*. *Hollywood* is a pool of excess which never dries; however satirical you might feel about it, there will always be a story that blows your diamond-cut collar clean off. Shadow, last night, was a lucky dog who went scuba-diving in a special suit costing "thousands and thousands of dollars." Well, as you can imagine, it's not something you see every day.

Merchandise limited to half an hour, *Hollywood Pests* attempts no analysis or history, of course. As viewers, we must be content to

stretch our eyes and say "Oh no," and "Look! Look!" But I did wonder whether these pet stories were all authentically "Hollywood." The owners of Patches—a domesticated grey horse, who watches westerns from the couch—were cheerful folks with no evident connection to movie money. In fact, they sounded more like the Tennessee cousins of Joe and Eddie Grundy. ("Patches" might equally have been the name of their car.)

Patches was a real character, however. The Gromit of the equine world. He munched drive-thru cheeseburgers, slept on a bed. Unlike the other pets featured last night, Patches gave the impression of making his own choices, possibly as a pragmatic response to the no-good laziness of his hosts. His whole demeanour (as he walked to the fridge for a beer, for example, or answered the phone) said "Oh, you just sit there, why don't you, 'til go."

BBC

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (11548)
- 6.00am BBC Breakfast News (Ceefax) (42919)
- 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (Ceefax) (7719364)
- 9.20am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (7879426)
- 9.45 Kilroy (s) (1002819)
- 10.30am Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (92345)
- 12.00pm News (Ceefax) regional news and weather (8705229) 12.05pm Room for Improvement with Sean Rafferty and Denise Waterman (s) (8583819)
- 12.30pm Going for Gold. Entertaining quiz show presented by Henry Kelly (s) (3834277)
- 1.00pm One O'Clock News (Ceefax) (45906)
- 1.30pm Regional News and weather (9437074)
- 1.40pm Neighbours (Ceefax) (44485838)
- 2.00pm Moon Over Miami (Ceefax) (s) (5925722)
- 2.50pm Today's Gourmet (s) (2985877)
- 3.15pm Secret Life of Toys (s) (8632548)
- 3.30pm Playdays (s) (1517432) 3.50pm Monster Cafe (s) (8731567) 4.05pm Casper Classics (s) (4058628) 4.10pm Little Mouse on the Prairie (Ceefax) (s) (2714819) 4.35pm Christmas Explains It All (s) (Ceefax) (931929)
- 5.00pm Newsround (Ceefax) (1819180)
- 5.10pm Blue Peter (Ceefax) (s) (1942884)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (s) (Ceefax) (s) (185074)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (258)
- 6.30pm Regional News magazines (838)
- 7.00pm Wipeout. Paul Daniels hosts the game show. (Ceefax) (s) (7797) WALES: 7.00pm Don't Look Back (7797)
- 7.30pm Tomorrow's World. Philippa Forrester reports from The Netherlands on the researcher who believes that cheese may hold the key to the ideal mozzarella trap. Viennese fairy reports on body fat (Ceefax) (s) (772)
- 8.00pm Hi-De-Hi. Trouble and Strife. The classic comedy series set at Maplin's Holiday Camp in 1959 (s) (Ceefax) (9345)
- 8.30pm A Question of Sport. David Coleman asks the questions in another round of the sporting quiz for celebrities (Ceefax) (s) (1180)
- 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (Ceefax) regional news and weather (1819)
- 9.30pm Newsnight (Ceefax) (s) (831109)
- 10.10pm FILM: Another 48 Hrs (1990) with Eddie Murphy and Nick Nolte. Sequel to 48 Hours. Disgraced lawyer Jack Cullen is given 48 hours to come up with enough evidence to convict the drug kingpin. He can think of nobody better to assist him than Cullen's next target, Reggie Hammond. Directed by Walter Hill (Ceefax) (s) (804797)
- 11.55pm FILM: Body Parts (1991) with Jeff Fahey. A criminal psychologist involved in a car crash undergoes intensive surgery and awakens from hospital with a newly crafted arm that develops a life of its own. He then finds out that the arm belonged to a serial killer. Directed by Eric Red (s) (80884)
- 12.00am Weather (7583778) WALES: 12.00am News headlines and weather (7583778)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each programme are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. The Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (V), Pluscode (P), and Video Programmer are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

- 6.00am Open University: Biology (7543074)
- 6.25 Oceanography (7562109) 6.50 Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita (8539451)
- 7.15pm See Hear Breakfast News (4629074)
- 7.30pm Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (s) (50884) 8.00pm The Really Wild Show (s) (1239180) 8.25pm The Little Polar Bear (s) (8557882) 8.30pm William's Wish Wellingtons (s) (s) (9424141)
- 8.40pm The Record (8456161)
- 9.05pm 1.45pm Daytime on Two. Educational programmes, including
- 11.20pm Shakespeare Shorts: Romeo and Juliet (s) (867722)
- 12.00pm English Film: Death of a Salesman (11118)
- 2.00pm The Little Polar Bear (s) (73544816) 2.05pm William's Wish Wellingtons (s) (73543987) 2.10pm Open View (73482088)
- 2.15pm Racing from Newbury. The 2.40, 3.10 and 3.40 races (576828)
- 3.55pm News (Ceefax) (2607548)
- 4.00pm Today's Day (s) (451)
- 4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (635)
- 5.00pm Esther. Esther Rantzen discusses the oldest profession (s) (1703)
- 5.30pm The Wartime Kitchen and Garden (s) (Ceefax) (987)
- 6.00pm Shooting Stars. Comedy quiz show (s) (Ceefax) (s) (600)
- 6.30pm The Champions. Fantasy espionage series (s) (Ceefax) (11345)
- 7.20pm Watch Out. Simon King presents wildlife news (721155)
- 7.30pm The Transatlantic Sessions (Ceefax) (s) (364) NORTHERN IRELAND: 7.30pm Three Colours Cezanne
- 8.00pm Top Gear Motorsport (Ceefax) (s) (7887)
- 8.30pm Gardeners' World (Ceefax) (s) (9722)
- 9.00pm Red Dwarf: VI. Filmmakerworld (s) (Ceefax) (s) (2161)
- 9.30pm Pulp Video (s) (s) (41083)
- 10.00pm News 1 Got News for You (Ceefax) (s) (81677)
- 10.10pm Newsnight (Ceefax) (239703)
- 11.15pm Fantasy Football League (s) (301703) WALES: 11.15pm Welsh Lobby (301703)
- 11.45pm Fantasy Football League (30074)
- 12.15am This Life (3426575) 1.00pm Westview (7571558) 1.05pm Underappreciated (8293558) 1.20pm Film: Father To Be (19597)
- 1.45pm This Life (s) (Ceefax) (s) (814190)
- 12.35am Under Exposed: The Private Collector (s) (4088020)
- 12.50pm FILM: Father to Be (1979) with Magnus Hansson. First in a short series of films by Lasse Hallstrom, which explore the lives of his characters. In this, a young girl's pregnancy. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom (Swedish with English subtitles) (845317). Ends at 2.40

CHOICE

Shakespeare Shorts
BBC2, 11.20am
Television personalities do battle with the Bard in a project designed to make Shakespeare accessible to schoolchildren. Here, as you have not seen them before, are Anna Friel of Brookside as Hermia, Patrick Robinson as Oberon, and Mark Antony and Louise Lombard taking on Lady Macbeth. The productions bring the plays into the 20th century and offer novel interpretations of key characters. We start with *Romeo and Juliet* and the scene in which the heroine is kicking against her arranged marriage. She is played by Marcelle Dupuy, presenter of the TV children's programme *Definitely, in a Caribbean setting. Dupuy runs clips of previous Julietts and is not impressed. She reckons they are too timid to be believable. Dupuy's Juliet is strong and gutsy.*

English Film: Death of a Salesman
BBC2, midday
Curiously, this is the first time British television has tackled Arthur Miller's famous play but the omission has been impressive. The play is a two-part production that deserves a wider audience. The budget may not stretch to elaborate sets but there has been no skimping on the human side. The director, David Thacker, is the foremost British interpreter of Miller's work, and the cast is so strong that Juliet Aubrey and Pam Ferris appear in relatively minor roles. Although you might not immediately recognise his voice or his face, Warren Mitchell is Willy Loman, the salesman returning to his Brooklyn home to reflect on a failed life. The challenge is to give an insignificant man a tragic dimension but Mitchell shows every sign of meeting it. Rosemary Harris plays his stoical wife.

999
BBC1, 9.30pm
You wonder how people get into these dreadful scrapes. If they didn't, of course, 999 would have to be taken off the air for lack of material. Tonight's scrapes prove to be particularly nailbiting. A hang-glider pilot jumps off Ben Nevis for charity. But there is not enough wind and he falls like a stone. Also in Scotland, three part-time firefighters approach a smoking barn and are blown off their feet by a huge explosion. In Cornwall an 11-year-old boy playing on a rope swing loses his grip and ends up with a piece of tree branch through his neck. Regular viewers will know to expect more or less happy endings, but not before the stuntmen and special effects teams have had a ball. Michael Buerk adds his usual plug for first-aid courses, though whether elementary lifesaving skills would have saved tonight's unfortunate is unlikely.

Have I Got News for You
BBC2, 10.00pm
Forget Bosnia and Northern Ireland. The big theme of the week is that Paul Merton is missing from the new series of *Have I Got News for You*. His absence is temporary. He is working on another project and will be back in the autumn. But in the meantime the show which turned Merton from a little-known fringe comedian into a celebrity may seem a little less impressive. The absence of the naughty schoolboy who refuses to do what teacher tells him will be much missed. Angus Deayton, however, is still in charge and with Merton away, Ian Hanley may even savour a rare win. David Ashby, the Conservative MP at the centre of a recent libel case, is tonight's guest. It is good to have the programme back though on past form a surfeit of wit over smut is probably too much to hope for.

GMTV

- 6.00am GMTV (8365730)
- 9.25am Win, Lose or Draw (s) (7850345)
- 9.55pm Regional News (Teletext) (6601884)
- 10.00pm The Time... The Place (s) (2387277)
- 10.35pm This Morning (44187277) 12.20pm Regional News (Teletext) (6821513)
- 12.30pm ITN News and weather (Teletext) (3630074)
- 12.55pm Murder, She Wrote: The Wind Around the Tower. An island-mystery starring Angela Lansbury (s) (5189711)
- 2.00pm Home and Away (Teletext) (s) (54494600) 2.25pm Chain Letters (Teletext) (s) (54586635) 2.50pm The Good Health Guide (Teletext) (4821009)
- 3.20pm ITN News headlines (Teletext) (7687364)
- 3.25pm Regional News (Teletext) (7686335)
- 3.30pm Rosie and Jim (s) (8633971) 3.45pm Zzzap! (s) (8633426) 4.00pm Teletext (s) (2804451) 4.25pm The Geeks (Teletext) (s) (2814839) 4.55pm Hang On (s) (4883432)
- 5.10pm A Country Practice (s) (8523726)
- 5.40pm News and weather (Teletext) (5189711)
- 6.00pm Home and Away (s) (Teletext) (s) (181819)
- 6.25pm HTV News (Teletext) (257180)
- 6.45pm Sportsweek (Teletext) (120722)
- 7.00pm Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right (Teletext) (s) (8093)
- 7.30pm Coronation Street (Teletext) (890)



Leslie Phillips contemplates (8.00pm)

- 8.00pm The Bill. Cunniff and Hollis must determine whether a pub-cup champion (Leslie Phillips) is operating outside the rules. (Teletext) (1513)
- 8.30pm The Upper Hand. Caroline has an offer to merge with another advertising agency (s) (Teletext) (s) (3548)
- 9.00pm Soldier, Soldier: Live Wire. Army drama (s) (Teletext) (s) (8618)
- 10.00pm ITN News at Ten and weather (Teletext) (25513) 10.30pm HTV West headlines and weather (447345)
- 10.40pm Entertaining Mr. Woodcock. A behind-the-scenes look at the entertainment business (171884)
- 11.10pm FILM: Rebel Rousers (1987) starring Cameron Mitchell, John Nicholson and Bruce Den. A drama about a motorcycle gang who terrorise a small Arizona town. Directed by Merlin B. Cohen (168203)
- 12.30am Hotel Babylon (s) (7410682)
- 1.10pm The Good Sex Guide... Lots (s) (8095622)
- 2.10pm FILM: Darker Than Amber (1970) starring Rod Taylor. A violent private detective drama directed by Robert Clouse (302223)
- 3.55pm Music Box Profile (2101285)
- 4.10pm Not Fade Away (s) (s) (5664310)
- 5.00pm On the Live Side. For jazz fans (20204)
- 5.30pm ITN Morning News (15295). Ends 6.00pm

As HTV WEST except:

- 2.50pm-3.20pm Van Can Cook (4822109)
- 6.25-7.00pm News Tonight (312432)
- 10.40pm Friday Live (439816)
- 11.40pm Hurter (864895)

WESTCOUNTRY

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm Coronation Street (3638083)
- 1.25-1.55pm Chain Letters (79061529)
- 1.55pm Home and Away (6808884)
- 2.25pm High Road (54577987)
- 2.55-3.20pm Gardeners' Diary (4367744)
- 5.10pm Home and Away (8523726)
- 6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (33074)
- 10.40pm News at Ten; Weather (25513)
- 10.55pm Westcountry News (365797)
- 10.55pm Film: Stealing Home (28068838)

CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm Home and Away (3638083)
- 1.25pm Chain Letters (79061529)
- 1.55pm A Country Practice (44386513)
- 5.10pm Shortland Street (8523726)
- 6.25-7.00pm Central News and Weather (312432)
- 10.40pm The Diary of Jack the Ripper (60727971)
- 12.15pm Tales from the Crypt: Strung Along. A puppet exacts revenge on the unfaithful wife of his puppeteer Starring Donald O'Connor (9749489)
- 12.40pm Hotel Babylon (7410684)
- 1.20pm The Good Sex Guide... Lots (8095625)
- 2.30pm The Chart Show (7012846)
- 3.10pm Dear Nick (2760107)
- 4.05pm Jobfinder (6194565)
- 5.20pm Alan Ege (1984882)

As HTV West except:

- 12.55pm-1.25pm Chain Letters (3638083)
- 1.25pm Home and Away (79061529)
- 1.55pm A Country Practice (44386513)
- 5.10pm Home and Away (8523726)
- 5.37pm Three Minutes - Your Story (899180)
- 6.00-7.00pm Meridian Tonight (33074)
- 10.00pm News at Ten; Weather (25513)
- 10.40pm Only a Game! (711884)
- 11.10pm Good Advice (804616)
- 11.40pm The War of the Worlds (884895)
- 5.00pm FreeScreen (20204)

8.25am Fifteen to One (s) (Teletext) (s) (3258155)

7.00pm The Big Breakfast (35829)

9.00pm The Golden Girls (s) (Teletext) (s) (11190)

9.30pm FILM: Four Men and a Prayer (1938, b/w). A playhouse drama starring Richard Greene, George Sanders, David Niven and William Henry. Directed by John Ford (82529)

11.00pm Tears of the Dragon. The last in the series on Mac's environmental legacy (s) (Teletext) (54000)

12.00pm Sesame Street. The guests are Tim Robbins and Marilyn Horne (s) (41242)

1.30pm Alfred J. Kwak (s) (18184635)

1.55pm Land Above the Trees. The flora and fauna of the Canadian Arctic (44384155)

2.20pm FILM: The Week and the Week (1953, b/w) starring Glynnis Johns and Diana Dors. William's prison drama directed by J. Lee Thompson (549971)

4.00pm Jimmy's (s) (Teletext) (s) (819)

4.30pm Fifteen to One. (Teletext) (s) (703)

5.00pm Rescue (s) (Teletext) (3871)

5.30pm An Inspector Calls (s) (Teletext) (155)

6.00pm T.F.I. Friday (aka Thank For It's Friday). Chris Evans starts the weekend with guests including Desmond Lynam, Roger Moore and Andy Cole (s) (81816)

7.00pm Channel 4 News and weather. (Teletext) (8478)

7.58pm Choice. Humphrey Carpenter reviews Roy McKinnon's biography of Bertrand Russell. (Teletext) (s) (787838)

8.00pm The Good Sex Guide... Lots (8095625)

8.30pm Brookside. (Teletext) (s) (4680)

9.00pm Cybill. American comedy starring Cybill Shepherd. (Teletext) (s) (4589)

9.30pm Father Ted. Comedy series about three priests on an island off the west coast of Ireland. (Teletext) (s) (36181)

10.00pm Roseanne: Construction Junction. Dan turns to Roseanne for advice when he is torn between job security and mavericks. (Teletext) (s) (23155)

10.30pm Rory Bremner - Who Else? More comic satire from the master impressionist (s) (240819)

11.10pm Eurotrash. Jean Paul Gaultier and Antoine de Caunes introduce items, from the Eurotrash show, from everywhere in Europe (s) (802258)

11.40pm Flava. A celebration of black music styles (s) (713155)

12.15am T.F.I. Friday (s) (5511391)

1.20pm FILM: The Great Smokey Roadblock (1978) starring Henry Fonda. A gently amusing road movie. Directed by John Leane (765049). Ends 2.55

2.00pm The Good Sex Guide... Lots (8095625)

2.30pm The Chart Show (7012846)

3.10pm Dear Nick (2760107)

4.05pm Jobfinder (6194565)

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RUGBY UNION 44

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OUT A FEW HOME
TRUTHS FOR ENGLAND

SPORT

FRIDAY APRIL 19 1996

RACING 45

HERN'S CLASSIC HOPES
ARE BLOWN OFF
COURSE AT NEWMARKET

Graveney and Gooch win ballot

Counties reject Botham for selector's role

BY ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

RAYMOND Illingworth flew home from his holiday retreat yesterday with his authority as chairman of England's cricket selectors diminished, but with his dignity intact. The election to his panel of David Graveney and Graham Gooch was not of his choosing, but neither was it a resignation issue, as the inclusion of Ian Botham might have been.

Botham was predictably and properly an also-ran when the 40 votes were counted. Graveney attracted comfortably the most support and Gooch, the England captain until 1993, was preferred to Brian Boles, who was very much Illingworth's man, for the second position. The newly-elected pair will meet Illingworth and David Lloyd, the recently-appointed coach, at Chelmsford over the weekend.

Officers of the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) were at their desks at Lord's before 7am, collating the last votes received by fax, alerting the parties involved and grateful to draw an appropriate line under a process that, this year, has received an exaggerated profile through the nomination of Botham.

Those who proposed him either did not know their man and his distinct talents, or they wished to embarrass Illingworth, who has been regularly and roundly condemned by Botham from his media platforms. It was an ill-judged campaign, supported by Botham's newspaper employers and by a public unaware of the nature of the job concerned. By Wednesday, even some of Botham's closest playing colleagues, such as Allan Lamb and David Gower, were voicing doubts about his suitability, and the man himself admitted his chances were slim. Even after the election result, Botham's name dominated in defeat. "Botham

snubbed" was one headline. "Botham reprieved" would have been more to the point. The post would not have suited him at all and he probably knows that now. He has never been a man for detail, nor one greatly concerned with the varying temperaments and abilities of those around him. He might have embarrassed himself as a selector, quite apart from causing disruption within an England hierarchy that now requires stability.

It will receive that from the spread of personalities now serving as selectors. Graveney and Gooch are addicted to English cricket, wise and informed about its trends and its players. Moreover, they acknowledge the limitations of their role. As Graveney said yesterday: "The selectors are just the foot-soldiers who go out and watch players. They

can't influence how the team plays. The main men are the chairman, captain and coach, and that is how it should be."

Graveney's relationship with Illingworth has inevitably been strained by recent events surrounding the chairmanship. Graveney stood in opposition, and would probably have won the subsequent ballot had he not been persuaded to withdraw by the officers of the Cricketers' Association, of which he is the salaried general secretary.

At first, Illingworth bridled, questioning if he could again work with Graveney. Wiser counsel has now prevailed and both men believe that there should not be a problem. "I wouldn't have allowed my name to go forward if I didn't think I could work with Illy," Graveney said. Illingworth concurred before leaving his Spanish villa and heading for a busy weekend, which involves meetings in London today and the England A v The Rest match, a putative Test trial, that begins tomorrow.

Gooch is a modern ground-breaker in being chosen as a selector while still playing. It is not unprecedented — Alan Smith, chief executive of the TCCB, served as a selector while captaining Warwickshire in the early 1970s — and there are definite benefits in having the views of one who sees potential Test players at close quarters. "I have long believed it is a good idea in principle," Gooch said, "and I am delighted the counties think that way too."

Michael Atherton, soon to be reappointed as England captain, is also delighted, for he now has a coach and two selectors he would have hand-picked. The elected pair give a thorough geographical spread to the panel, but what their effect will be on selectorial issues remains to be seen. The certainty is that Illingworth has lost power.

Last year, when there were only four selectors — of whom one, Fred Titmus, was a staunch Illingworth ally — the chairman could force through any decision with his casting vote. His increased authority as team manager also enabled him to be autocratic, such as in the extraordinary, though ultimately successful, reorganising of the team on the eve of the Lord's Test against West Indies.

That will not apply now. Indeed, as Lloyd, Graveney and Gooch are instinctively supporters of Atherton, there is scope for Illingworth to feel uncomfortably isolated. He is, however, nothing if not stubborn, and has now reiterated his determination to see out his final term as chairman. It promises to be an interesting one.

Century on debut, page 44
Gupte's example, page 44

Symonds opts for England

ANDREW SYMONDS, the dual-qualified batsman who rejected an England A tour last winter, arrived back from Australia yesterday to sign a three-year contract with Gloucestershire that pledges his future to England (Alan Lee writes).

The issue of Symonds's ambivalence over his nationality threatened a players' strike until the Test and County Cricket Board acted to tighten the declaration of availability for England that must now be signed by all qualified players.

Symonds, 20, was named as Young Cricketer of the Year in 1995 after averaging 56 in his first season of county cricket. His decision to return may have been influenced by his failure to establish a place in the Queensland side.



Iain Sutcliffe, the Oxford University opener, drives elegantly during his innings of 65 against Durham at The Parks yesterday. Photograph: Julian Herbert

Six birdies for Faldo show that master's touch remains intact

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN HILTON HEAD ISLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA

WHOEVER it was who first said "the more I practise, the luckier I get" has a supporter in Nick Faldo. It was the years spent grooving his new swing, after he had changed it in the mid-Eighties, that served Faldo so well when the pressure was at its greatest in the fourth round of the Masters.

The knowledge that his swing was technically sound enabled him to hit almost every shot as he wanted to last Sunday, and so win his third green jacket.

His self-confidence in his ability to reproduce the sort of shots on the course that he was able to hit on the practice range, which Norman was so singularly unable to do, was evident again in Faldo's opening round of 70, one under par, in the MCI Classic at the Harbour Town Links here.

This left Faldo four strokes behind the early leaders, who included Jim Furyk, whose swing was more described as being akin to that of a man trying to kill a snake in a telephone booth. Guy Boros and Ken Green were the other players on 66.

Faldo has practised less than usual this week because

of the demands on him after the drama at Augusta. But, apart from a couple of drives pushed out to the right, a skied one that only travelled 200 yards from the tee, and a mid-iron that was slingshot by his own high standards, clipped a tree and came down 75 yards short of the 12th green, he played perfectly acceptably.

In his late thirties, Faldo is showing how to marry his

ill luck of Irish 43
Jameses flourish 43

experience with advances in technology. He no longer goes running, for example, because of the damage that does to his joints. Instead, he uses a machine known as a power walker, on which he has become the best in the gym he uses at Lake Nona. He can power walk a mile in seven minutes.

Likewise, he has learnt how to practise. He no longer hits hundreds of balls because his back gets stiff. Rather, he goes to the practice ground with a specific aim of, say, manufacturing a series of shots, one he calls the chicken wing, another the bunt. Once he is happy, he moves on to the putting green.

At Augusta, he was satisfied with his long game by Tuesday evening and concentrated for the rest of the week on getting comfortable with a new putting technique that David Leadbetter, his coach, had thought up for him.

"I stand as high as I can," Faldo said. "At first I felt really awkward, as if I was putting with a driver. But, on video, it looked fine and so I persevered. It worked, because I had only one three-putt all week."

"It enabled me to attack the hole confidently. I had had a tendency before to lift the heel of my putter up and hit with a closed face."

"I was missing too many of those eight to ten-footers that you want to hole, and so I was becoming tentative. Standing taller has solved that." He holed four putts of ten feet or more on the tiny greens yesterday.

Faldo's driving with his new metal-headed, T-zoid driver, which has given him as much as 15 yards extra length from the tee because the ball leaves the clubface with more spring and less spin, was evident again in the first round of this tournament, one he won 1984.

So was his artistry in shaping shots this way and that as required by the narrow fairways which are lined with

pine, cypress and oak trees. On the short 14th, he started his tee shot out to the left of the flag and brought it in so that it stopped near the stick. On the 16th, he drew his second shot in from the right, close enough to sink the putt for his sixth and last birdie of the day.

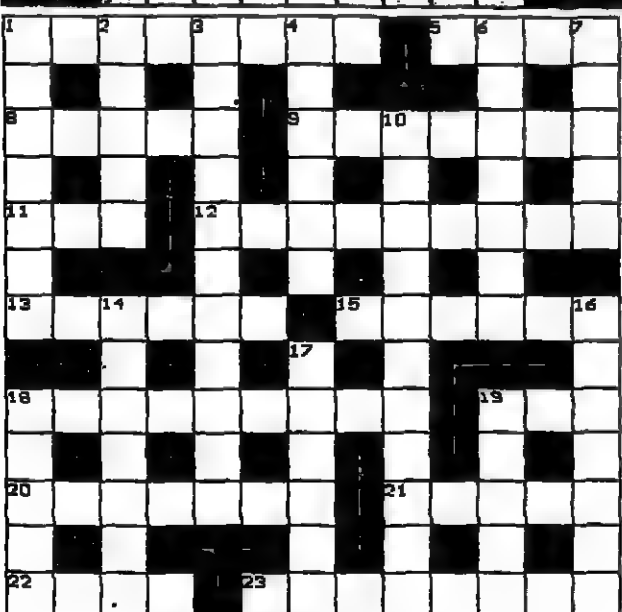
He tried to fade his tee shot over a long, thin bunker and on to the 17th green, too, but the finesse he had demonstrated previously temporarily deserted him and his ball ended in sand.

"That was the wrong shaped shot," he confessed.

ON MONDAY
IN THE TIMES

The Times cricket game returns this summer in an exciting new format and with a first prize of £10,000. Full details of how to play Invisive Team Cricket will be published in a 16-page guide on Monday. Make sure of your copy of The Times, the paper for cricketers.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 760

ACROSS

- 1 Large-eyed primate, the gargoyle (4-4)
- 5 Film extract: cut (piece from) (4)
- 8 Boring task (5)
- 9 Heights Wolfe scaled: a patriarch (7)
- 11 Top of tin (3)
- 12 Stude items; the irascible treated with them (3,6)
- 13 Easily remembered (tune) (6)
- 15 Big wood: smokers' organisation (6)
- 18 Building designer (9)
- 19 Put on; it quiet flows (3)
- 20 Ground-breaker (7)
- 21 Brown earth pigment; a moth (5)

DOWN

- 2 Went: a side (4)
- 3 In the exact words (8)
- 4 Rustic (7)
- 6 Long-bladed weapon (5)
- 7 Get over initial shyness (5,3,3)
- 10 Spirits from wine (6)
- 14 Seine port (2,5)
- 16 Presses for info: dancing-shoes (5)
- 17 Empirical formula (4,2,5)
- 18 Mark as completed; reprimand (4,3)
- 19 Fit of temper (7)
- 22 Graduate's qualification (6)
- 23 Horrify (5)
- 24 First appearance (5)

The solution to 759 will be published Wednesday, April 24

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Grizzlies find record hard to bear

Oliver Holt looks at
the basketball team

who have become cult
figures as a result of
their talent for losing



they lost 19 straight games. Undaunted, they had another tilt at the record and, two weeks ago, they cracked it. When they lost 105-91 to the Utah Jazz in Salt Lake City, they made it 21 defeats in a row and eclipsed the 24-year-old record.

Now another new mark is looming. The Grizzlies must win two out of their final three games to avoid becoming the worst first-year, or expansion, side since the formation of the NBA. So far, they have won 13 games and lost 66. They are 49 wins back on the leaders of the Western Conference, the Seattle SuperSonics. The odds are not good.

But, as Bulls supporters hung off freeway bridges and helicopters followed the team bus all the way from Chicago

to the Milwaukee stadium, the Grizzlies have found that their heroic failures have made them cult figures, too. Commentators have taken to calling them the Bad News Bears and other players have commended them for their spirit. "They're going through some tough times," one of the Jazz players said after the landmark defeat, "but they're trying to stop the bleeding."

Most of the attention has been lavished on their giant center, Bryant Reeves, who is known as Big Country. Before a January game against the Los Angeles Clippers, Vancouver hosted a Hair Country promotion offering any supporter willing to have his or her hair cut in the same style

as Big Country's flat-top, two free tickets to the game. Only 28 stylists were hired for the event but more than 2,000 would-be victims turned up.

"I know you've got to try to be positive and look ahead, but this is very hard to deal with," Big Country said of his team's record losing sequence. If there is any consolation, their average margin of defeat has dropped from 14.1 points to 10.9 points.

Some link the travails of the Grizzlies to the glory of the Bulls, arguing that the expansion of the NBA with teams in Vancouver and Toronto has diluted the overall standard. It is not that the Bulls are better, they say, just that the rest are worse.

It does not seem to bother Jordan and company too much. Their eyes are fixed firmly on the play-offs and another championship to cement their claim to be the team of the Nineties. "It was an ugly game," Jordan said, after the win in Milwaukee, "but sometimes ugly is beautiful." The Grizzlies could do with that kind of ugly, too.

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Israel sees Iran as next in line for punishment

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Government's senior spokesman said yesterday it was now a "working assumption" that a Western-led coalition, similar to the one which drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991, would launch a pre-emptive strike against Iran to prevent it obtaining a nuclear capability.

In an interview with *The Times*, Uri Dromi, head of the Government Press Office, also said that any spectacular attacks on Jewish targets at home or abroad, as threatened by militant Islamic groups, would prompt reaction from Israel which would be "very, very drastic" and make Operation Grapes of Wrath, now battering Lebanon, pale by comparison.

NUCLEAR FEAR

Although Mr Dromi refused to give details of retaliation planned in such an event, there has been speculation it could involve an air attack on Iran's top-secret nuclear plant at Neka, 100 miles northeast of Tehran, or a bombing blitz to flatten the southern suburbs of Beirut, the stronghold of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah commanders.

Speaking in his office, near where an Islamic suicide bomb recently killed or maimed almost all the Jewish passengers on a bus, Mr Dromi expressed Israeli frustration that only America and Britain had expressed support for the motives behind Israel's action in Lebanon.

Iran will be when it can intimidate the world," Mr Dromi said. "So looking ahead, Israel is sounding the alarm, just as it did in 1981 when we bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor and were initially condemned for it."

He added: "It is accepted that an international coalition will eventually have to trim Iran's nuclear ambitions and its capability to disrupt peace and stability in the region. What is happening now against Hezbollah is merely a sideshow to the main action which will have to come. The Iranian strategy goes far further than a threat just against Israel or Katyusha attacks from Lebanon."



Dromi: praised Major for criticism of Iran

attempts to secure a ceasefire in Lebanon.

"If they pull a big one on us, we would be forced to deal with the Hezbollah in a different way," said Mr Dromi, who was appointed by Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Prime Minister.

The spokesman, who has had to field much international criticism since Operation Grapes of Wrath was launched eight days ago, added: "Hezbollah is the spearhead of Iran's terror network and its attempt to undermine the Middle East peace process. The world has to understand that either Hezbollah is taken out and there is a peace process, or there is war, all-out chaos here."

He said that John Major was alone among 29 world leaders who addressed the Sharm el Sheikh conference, apart from Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, who had singled out Iran by name as one of the countries behind the terrorism threatening to destabilise the region. "Mr Major was the only one to call a spade a spade," Mr Dromi said. "He is very much to be commended for it."

There has been diplomatic speculation that the potential for future united action against Iran's nuclear plant, which is buried in a hillside, was discussed during this week's visit by Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary.

His outspoken remarks came after reports that Israel and America had discussed the possibility of striking at Iran's growing nuclear capability during the recent anti-terrorism summit in Sharm el Sheikh. Yesterday American intelligence reports quoted in the Israeli press said that Chinese experts were expected in Tehran this week to begin construction of a new uranium enrichment plant. It is considered by experts to be the last stage in Iran's attempt to become the first revolutionary Islamic government to acquire nuclear weapons.

"If Iraq was an international hate figure in the 1991 Gulf War, you can imagine what

ther than a threat just against Israel or Katyusha attacks from Lebanon."

It is an open secret that the Israeli Defence Force has already undertaken training to maximise the effects of a long-range bombing raid against Iran. In the words of one Israeli military source, in the event of an attack against Jews causing a large loss of life "Iran would probably be the only address to answer to."

Mr Dromi said that in the event of suicide attacks, such as those threatened by the 70 Hezbollah fighters who recently appeared on television in Lebanon with explosives apparently tied to their waists, Israel would abandon all

Mr Dromi, a reserve colonel in the Israeli Air Force, underscored how world opinion had turned full circle and eventually applauded the 1981 raid on Iraq's Osirak reactor, once the full extent of President Saddam Hussein's belligerent intentions had been exposed.

"We were accused of inventing and exaggerating that [nuclear] threat at the time, and there were even annual calls at the United Nations for reparations which were eventually dropped in 1991," Mr Dromi said.

"I am afraid that, when you are in the front line, you have to take what appears harsh action before a threat can be realised."



An old man weeps for eight of his family who died during an Israeli air raid on Nabatiyet south Lebanon

Peres and PLO chief agree on security

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL and the Palestine Liberation Organisation yesterday resumed peace talks for the first time since the Jewish state was struck by the recent wave of suicide bombings by Islamic extremists.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, praised Yasser Arafat, the group's chairman, for helping to make the meeting possible, saying that the Palestinian leader had

ARAFAT

cracked down on terrorists in areas under his control. "This meeting was devoted to security and we see eye to eye on it," he said.

The Israeli-PLO peace process had been suspended following the bombings in February and March by members of Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) and Islamic Jihad which left at least 61 people dead.

Under American and Israeli pressure, the Palestinian authority arrested 700 suspected Muslim militants, but failed to capture Israel's most wanted man, Mohammed Diif, commander of the Hamas military wing.

With the talks now revived, the Israeli Prime Minister said negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories would begin on May 4.

Pressure on gambler Assad to play his hand

BY MICHAEL BINYON DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

YESTERDAY was one of the bloodiest days in the Middle East for years. Amid the carnage there is only one man in the region who stands to gain from the slaughter of political hopes: President Assad of Syria.

One of the area's canniest and longest-serving rulers, he has long been seen in Israel as the Jewish state's most single-minded and uncompromising opponent. For five years, since the Madrid peace summit, Syria has been negotiating directly with Israel. For more than two years, agreement has seemed within reach, yet, like a outrage, on coming closer it has seemed each time further away.

Israel is losing patience. Its onslaught in Lebanon, now a de facto

Syrian protectorate, is intended to force Damascus to make a decision: peace or war. No American President or Secretary of State who has spent hours in negotiations with Mr Assad doubts he wants a settlement — but on his terms. As long as all Israel's neighbours held out for a comprehensive peace, Syria could dictate terms. But with the signing by the Palestinians and Jordan of separate treaties, its leverage was lessened.

Mr Assad, angry but patient, refused to be rushed. The more America and outside powers pushed him to join the peace bandwagon, the more he dragged his feet. Syria has become a focus of Arab disillusion: his resistance made him again the man to

be courted and won over; and his caution, he must now feel, has been vindicated.

Having lost the Soviet Union's backing, Mr Assad can no longer negotiate from a position of military parity with Israel. He was one of the first to see that America now holds all the main cards. But he still has enough of a hand to ensure there can be no settlement without him. Among his cards are his tolerance of Palestinian opponents of the Oslo agreements; his friendly links with Iran, an open opponent of any political accommodation; his political and military control over Lebanon; and his readiness, at every crucial moment in peace talks, to use the psychological tactic of delay to force more concessions.

Mr Assad believes he can wait. There are disadvantages: Syria needs

the greatly increased market access a settlement would bring. He risks the return of a Likud government in Israel, likely to renege on proposals to return all the Golan Heights. Syria might also be sidelined in the gradual acceptance of Israel by Arab countries in North Africa and the Gulf.

Against that, however, are the dangers of committing himself. The most important is the threat to his own regime. A peace treaty would bring huge popular expectations of higher living standards and pressure for a big cut in the swollen military budget.

Mr Assad is ultimately dependent on the military. He is in poor health and, after the death of his son, Basil, there is no clear line of succession. A peace treaty, an extraordinary volte-face, would be a shock to the regime that could prove dangerous.

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PER PERSON

5 things you didn't know about life after death.

- 1 The average 'breadwinner' is insured for only 2 years' earnings.
- 2 The average mortgage-linked life policy covers the house but will rarely provide for the family.
- 3 The average family spends more than £800 a month.
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DIAN OCEAN

Russia will offer pact to stop nuclear smugglers

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

THE Kremlin will propose unprecedented co-operation between the world's most powerful intelligence agencies in an attempt to halt the threat of nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists or rogue states.

On the eve of the summit of the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries in Moscow, intended to reduce the threat of nuclear disaster a decade after the accident at Chernobyl, the Russians have made it clear that they are prepared to co-operate as never before to stamp out nuclear smuggling. "In the sphere of nuclear safety Russia suggests a transition from confrontation and rivalry to co-operation," Viktor Mikhailov, the Minister of Atomic Energy, said.

Western diplomats in Moscow said that an agreement would probably be signed tomorrow between the world leaders to tighten security around nuclear sites, to improve the accounting system for fissile material and establish an intelligence-sharing operation to shadow potential nuclear smugglers.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union five years ago, there have

been a number of reported thefts of nuclear material inside Russia, including six cases when either enriched uranium or plutonium, the basic components of an atomic weapon, were stolen.

"This agreement will help to tighten the security around these installations," said an American official, who added that in spite of lingering Cold War suspicions, the Russians had admitted foreign experts into their most secret nuclear sites. The summit is also

Pressure to endorse Yeltsin

Moscow. John Major arrived here last night facing intense pressure at the summit of the Group of Seven industrialised countries to fall in line with other leaders and endorse President Yeltsin's re-election bid.

Although the summit is supposed to tackle the pressing questions of nuclear safety and security, there is little dispute among Western and Russian officials that the session has also been designed to benefit Mr Yeltsin's election campaign. With less than two months to go,

he is trailing in the polls behind Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader, in what is expected to be a tight race.

The summit, held at Moscow's initiative, could provide a useful platform for President Yeltsin to project himself as a statesman. Already America, France and Germany have come out in support of Mr Yeltsin, warning that a Communist victory could be disastrous for Russia and its links to the West. By contrast there has been virtual silence from the British side.

In spite of the lavish preparations under way in Moscow to greet the G7 leaders during the 48-hour summit, critics charge that the meeting will be little more than a talking shop.

In particular there has been criticism that no new funding will be on offer to help countries of the former Soviet Union to tackle the existing environmental problems and halt the threat of a new catastrophe. "Instead of a state dinner, the G7 countries should perhaps hold a prayer breakfast," said Tom Cochran, an American environmentalist. "The only thing standing between us and another Chernobyl is the grace of God."

Also, it is widely accepted, even by the participants, that a good part of the gathering in Moscow is intended to help to boost President Yeltsin's re-election campaign for June's vote. The Russian leader will take the opportunity of projecting himself as a statesman, while Western leaders are likely to endorse his candidacy against the strong challenge by Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist leader.

Leading article, page 21

Anti-drugs deal with Ukraine

FROM JULIUS SHERMAN IN KIEV

JOHN MAJOR last night signed an international agreement with Ukraine to introduce a tough programme against illicit drug trafficking.

Mr Major announced the historic deal with Yevhen Marchuk, the Prime Minister, during a one-day visit to Kiev aimed to show Britain's backing for Ukrainian independence.

Ukraine lies on the major drug-trafficking route from Afghanistan, Central Asia and India, through to Turkey and then the West.

The reciprocal deal will enable the Ukrainian and British Governments to freeze and confiscate illegal assets from drug and other serious crimes, such as fraud, theft and money laundering.

Britain has already made similar deals with 37 other countries, of which 26 are already in force.

After talks with Leonid Kuchma, the Ukrainian President, Mr Major also announced a £20 million allocation from Britain's "Know How Fund" to help Eastern economies. The money will be used to help Ukraine to set up energy-sector projects.



John Major receives a traditional bread-and-salt welcome at Kiev airport as Yevhen Marchuk, second right, Ukraine's Prime Minister, looks on

Left turns guns on Berlusconi as campaign closes

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

AS ITALY'S political parties wound up their election campaigns yesterday with festive open-air rallies before Sunday's poll, the Left turned its fire on Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon, in a bid to stop him from becoming Prime Minister for a second time.

But Signor Berlusconi, leader of Forza Italia and Prime Minister for eight months in 1994, hit back at his critics and said he intended to form Italy's next Government.

Massimo D'Alema, leader of the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) — the former Communists — said that Signor Berlusconi's dynamic business ethic made him a bad statesman because he lacked a "liberal democratic background". Forza Italia officials replied that the democratic credentials of the PDS were open to question, and gave a warning that if the Centre Left, led by Professor Romano Prodi, won the election, Signor D'Alema and other "Marxists" would pull the strings.

In the last election two years ago, Signor Berlusconi stormed to victory with the promise of entrepreneurial vigour. He was the main beneficiary of the 1992-93 "gentle revolution" which swept the discredited Christian Democrat old guard from power in the wake of the anti-corruption campaign by "Clean Hands" magistrates in Milan.

But Signor Berlusconi was accused of corruption in his huge Fininvest business empire, and his Government fell at the end of 1994 when the separatist Northern League withdrew. His trial in Milan, which began four months ago,

ITALIAN ELECTIONS



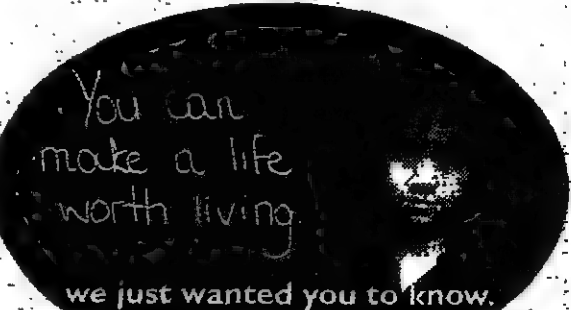
resumed on Wednesday. The charges have also multiplied.

There were signs yesterday that the row over Signor Berlusconi's suitability for high office was causing strains within the Centre Right. President Scalfaro stepped into the closing stages of the campaign by expressing support for the magistrates. A furious Signor Berlusconi said he was being victimised. But Gianfranco Fini, the "post-Fascist" leader who dominates the Centre Right, said the magistrates' activities were legitimate.

All signs point to a close race, with Italians disappointed that the 1992-93 reforms have not put an end to "revolving-door" governments. Voters are apathetic. "After the hopes of three years ago, we have reverted to bad old ways," one journalist said.

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مكتبة الأمل

Americans still in state of shock from day of terror

FROM TOM RHODES IN OKLAHOMA CITY

AN UNTOUCHED box of toys sits in one corner of Aren Almon's garage in Oklahoma City. They provide perhaps the most poignant reminder that her daughter, Baylee, would have celebrated her second birthday last night.

The previous year she had watched with adoration as her little girl plunged one hand into the birthday cake, blew out its single candle, and unwrapped the soft toys and the Sunday dress that had been her own special gift. The next day Baylee was one of 19 children who died when a huge fertiliser bomb exploded beneath the day-care centre where she was playing.

The portrait of the dead infant, cradled in the arms of a fireman outside the smouldering ruins of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building, became an icon for an entire nation after America's worst act of terrorism. Yesterday, balloons in hand and toys by their side, the Almon family held a private birthday memorial for Baylee.

More than the other families in Oklahoma, including Edye Smith, whose two sons Colton and Chase also died in the blast, Aren Almon has become the focus for those still struggling to understand the horror of a bomb that took the lives of 168 people.

Those who felt the shudder of the explosion and witnessed the carnage have mostly recovered from the horror of the blast at 9.03am on April 19 last year. Today the majority of federal employees in Oklahoma will not return to work—a move more in honour of the dead rather than over any anxiety about a repeat attack.

But for many of the victims' families and indeed survivors of the Oklahoma tragedy, time has stood still. Mrs Almon, for instance, has been fighting a protracted battle to have the image of her daughter removed from T-shirts, button-holes and even statues. "I want to remember her as she was," she said.

Throughout the city, there is an outpouring of grief, especially for the dead children. The chain fence surrounding



The photograph, above, that captured a nation's horror, and Aren Almon, mother of dead Baylee, a year on



the site of the federal building has become a mourning mecca on which teddy bears, ribbons and wreaths hang next to crucifixes and messages from schoolchildren. This has become Oklahoma's wailing wall.

Six children, apparently sitting in a cubbyhole away from the windows, survived the blast and have since become known as the "Little Miracles of the Bombing". They are in various states of physical and mental health. P.J. Allen, two, was in intensive care for weeks. His lungs are so badly damaged he still sleeps inhaling from an oxygen tank and relies on a tube inserted into his trachea to help him breathe during the day.

Nekia McCloud, five, had her skull fractured and, though she can ride a bicycle

and walk normally, the young girl can barely utter 25 words. Joe Webber, two, had his mouth wired shut for two months and has a large scar across the left of his face.

Rebecca Denny, three, needed 130 stitches to repair facial cuts. Her younger brother, Brandon, lost part of the left side of his brain.

The eldest child survivor, Christopher Nguyen, six, was in a coma for seven days, both eardrums were burst and his internal organs damaged. "It hasn't been easy," said Thu Nguyen, his father, who arrived in America from a refugee camp in Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

On a blustery evening this week a candlelit vigil took place in the Oklahoma dusk, less than half a mile from the centre of tragedy. It was a small affair but one which, perhaps more than any other, served to illustrate why Oklahoma's suffering will not end today when Al Gore, the Vice-President, visits the site and the names of its victims are read to a silent audience.

Washington: The House of Representatives was set to join the Senate last night in approving a controversial Anti-Terrorism Bill rushed through Congress in time for the first anniversary of the bombing (Martin Fletcher writes).

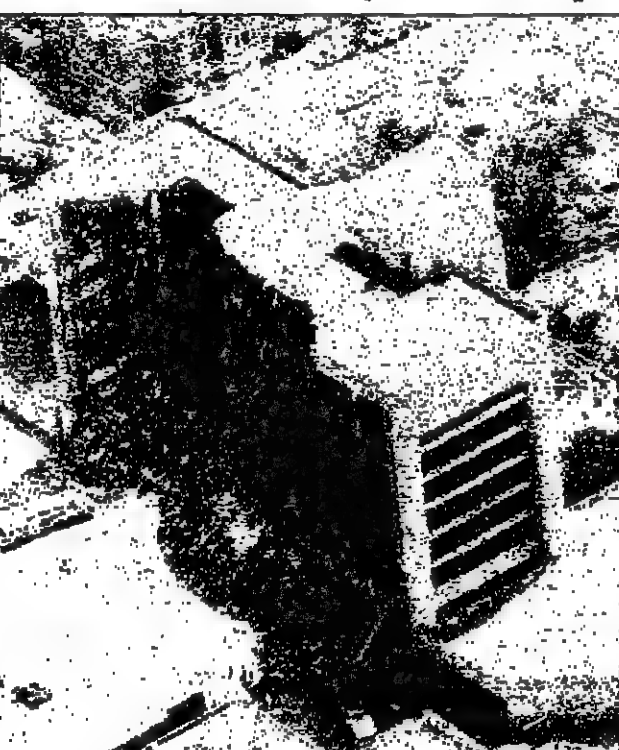
The Bill will accelerate executions of death-row inmates by curtailing the federal appeals process. Bob Dole, the Senate leader and Republican presidential nominee, said it would "curb the endless frivolous appeals" that allow killers to survive an average of eight years after sentencing. But civil liberties groups said it would lead to the execution of innocent people.

The Bill also provides \$1 billion (£660 million) to fight terrorism and bans fundraising for terrorist groups in America. It also permits close-circuit television coverage of the trial of the two men charged with the bombing so that families of the victims will not have to travel to Denver, Colorado, to watch it.

Leading article, page 21



Mourners in Oklahoma City attend a candlelight memorial service this week, one year after 168 people were killed in a terrorist blast



The wrecked Alfred P. Murrah federal building

Lawyer is sure prosecution case can be undermined

BY TOM RHODES

ENDLESS acres of farmland and a few dead armadillos mark the route which leads to Stephen Jones, a smalltown criminal lawyer with arguably the most difficult job in America.

The principal claim to fame of Enid, Oklahoma, a typical Midwestern town, sits in his office and explains why his client, Timothy McVeigh, was an innocent bystander in the worst act of terrorism on American soil.

Mr Jones is confident that the Government's case, the largest criminal investigation in American history involving 21,000 witnesses, is riddled with reasonable doubt and claims that his 27-year-old client had been framed.

"All of this has been an elaborate artifice in which... you conjure up that he was the person involved when in reality you have known almost from the first moment that there was a serious flaw in the entire Government's theory," he said. "I think it is an eminently defensible case."

Mr McVeigh, the prosecution has claimed, was a disaffected Gulf War veteran who plotted with his old army buddy, Terry Nichols, to

bomb the Alfred P. Murrah building on the second anniversary of the FBI siege at Waco, Texas, in which 80 members of the Branch Davidian cult died.

He is alleged to have parked a rented van containing 4,000lb of explosive outside the building on April 19 last year. The subsequent blast killed 168 people and maimed more than 400 others.

Hours later, Mr McVeigh was arrested by a state trooper in a car without a number plate. He had no licence and a

gun was found in the boot. Within two days his alleged accomplice was also behind bars. A comprehensive search for others involved in the bombing came to nothing.

Although he describes himself as a county-seat lawyer, Mr Jones was an assistant to Richard Nixon in New York, a congressional aide in Washington, and ran unsuccessfully for the Senate as a Republican. He is considered one of the best five criminal lawyers in Oklahoma.

Mr Jones is seeking to define the Oklahoma City bombing as a conspiracy involving white supremacists, neo-Nazis and even British ultra-nationalists.

The idea that two army drifters could carry out the largest terrorist attack in the history of the United States just by themselves defies all experience and logic. That is not the way terrorism works. To say that because McVeigh and Nichols read the *Anarchist's Cookbook* they could make such a huge bomb successfully by themselves is like saying you could become the world's greatest lover by reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he said.



McVeigh: his defence blames neo-Nazi plot

Defence turns to Lockerbie experts

Enid, Oklahoma: British forensic science experts involved in the Lockerbie disaster investigation have been approached by Timothy McVeigh's lawyers to help to defend the chief suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing (Tom Rhodes writes).

Stephen Jones, for Mr McVeigh, said he was engaging the services of Dr T. K. Marshall, the former chief pathologist for Northern Ireland, and the forensic laboratory of the Lothian and Borders police.

He said: "They have some people who have considerable experience in Northern Ireland and have recently been employed there, and of course they did some of the forensic work on Pan Am 103." However, Scottish police said that they had not yet agreed to take part.

Mr Jones first visited Britain in January to seek advice from counter-terrorism experts. He said that Dr Marshall and members of the Scottish police forensic team may be called to give evidence at his client's trial, due to start later this year.

The defence hopes the Britons, including 21 forensic scientists in Edinburgh, can lend weight to Mr Jones's belief that neither Mr McVeigh nor Terry Nichols, his alleged accomplice, could have been responsible for last April's bombing.

Mr Jones said British advisers deemed it unlikely the two could have acted alone.

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Chinese officers to be shot for 'conspiracy'

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

A GROUP of Chinese army officers has been sentenced to death for "counter-revolutionary crimes" and stockpiling weapons, Western intelligence sources confirmed yesterday.

According to the sources, the Hong Kong newspaper *Eastern Express*, foreign electronic eavesdropping on army communications revealed that 80 officers were charged with counter-revolution, China's broadest catch-all capital offence. Thirty-nine were sentenced to death by firing squad. The details of the offence are unclear.

The "conspiracy" came to light after a dinner in December last year turned into a violent fracas involving about 40 soldiers. Words were exchanged leading to an investigation which resulted in conspiracy charges. At a court-martial in early March ten counts of counter-revolution, which embraces offences ranging from stealing cultural treasures and rape to armed uprisings, were stipulated, including "causing chaos" and "holding secret meetings".

The officers were additionally charged with collecting more than 400 weapons, 130,000 rounds of ammunition, more than 200 sticks of dynamite, 39 military vehicles

and four armoured cars. The People's Liberation Army, under the direction of the party's Central Military Commission chaired by President Jiang Zemin, is constantly reminded to obey the party.

It is extremely rare for examples of army disobedience to surface. A spectacular past example was when the commander of the 38th Army refused to obey an order to crush the Tiananmen uprising in June 1989. He remains in prison. It is said that other units feel shame that the army attacked Chinese citizens for the first time since the Cultural Revolution, losing its reputation as the "big brother of the people".

Nonetheless, there is little obvious reason for serious army discontent. Although the forces are due for a cutback from three million men and women to 2.5 million, no time has been set. Mr Jiang promotes officers to the Central Committee in significant numbers. He usually appears in well-cut Western suits, but sometimes dons a severe military tunic, although he has never been a soldier, when he meets his generals.

The military has been given the task of projecting China's power beyond its borders for the first time in modern history. Its sabre-rattling in the South China Sea alarmed Asian nations from the Philippines to Malaysia.

The forces are well funded and are heavily involved in business, including property in Hong Kong. While officially the army receives £4.6 billion every year, which is only slightly more than the Australian military budget, the actual sum may be as much as eight times higher, which puts China in roughly the same class as America. Military experts estimate that Chinese defence spending has increased by 50 per cent every year since 1990.

In its attempt to intimidate Taiwan during its elections by firing missiles and staging mock invasions earlier this year, the military achieved little except to attract an enormous American task force into the western Pacific. This may have dimmed the lustre of China's generals who reportedly pressed Mr Jiang to take a tough line against the independence-seeking moves of President Lee Teng-hui. However, in two to three years the army may be able to invade Taiwan if it is willing to accept gigantic losses, risk a confrontation with America and fight a long war of attrition against Taiwanese guerrillas.

Clinton apologises for rape of Okinawa girl by servicemen

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN IN TOKYO

PRESIDENT Clinton yesterday apologised before the Japanese people for the "horrible" rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by three American servicemen who were stationed in Okinawa.

Addressing the Diet, Mr Clinton spoke of the sorrow Americans felt at last September's incident, which provoked protests on the island and national antagonism towards the 47,000 American troops in Japan.

"The American people profoundly regret the horrible violence done to a young schoolgirl there. Our hearts go out to her, to her family and her loved ones, and to the entire Okinawan community," Mr Clinton said on his final day of a state visit which focused on the security relations between the two countries.

Yesterday's setting of the parliament building underscored Washington's concern to defuse anger that undermined the US-Japan security



Clinton told Diet of sorrow Americans felt

treaty, backbone of America's Far East strategy. The President said that his talks with Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, had built on the special relationship to enhance the security alliance, which he called "the cornerstone of stability throughout Asia".

The strategic declaration signed by the two leaders on Wednesday commits their na-

tions to a more robust alliance serving not only the defence of Japan but also the stability of the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Appealing directly to the Japanese to back the strengthening of the alliance, Mr Clinton suggested the alternative was ominous. "Consider what might happen if the United States were to withdraw entirely from this region. It could spark a costly arms race that could destabilise northeast Asia."

When Mr Clinton left Japan last night he had achieved his main goal of shoring up America's military strategy, even though some touchy trade disputes are still unresolved. To remain a global power, the United States depends on Japanese cash and commitment.

Mr Hashimoto pledged continuing financial support for American bases and a willingness to back the United States in foreign military operations by giving logistical support, instead of restricting Japan's armed forces to defending its borders as described by the pacifist constitution.



A young Liberian Krahn rebel at the Barclay Training Centre barracks in Monrovia. More than 20,000 people, including West African peacekeepers, are in the compound, besieged by rival factions (Sam Kiley writes). Human Rights Watch says that six years of civil war have left thousands of Liberian children programmed to kill

DJ sacked for Brown death joke

New York: Bob Grant, a controversial right-wing disc jockey, has been sacked for making a joke about Ron Brown, the US Commerce Secretary who died in an aircraft crash in Croatia this month (Quentin Letts writes).

As initial reports came in on the day of the accident, Mr Grant said on his talk show: "My hunch is that he [Brown] is the one survivor. I just have that hunch. Maybe it's because, at heart, I'm a pessimist."

Mugabe moves to seize farms

Harare: Zimbabwe celebrated its sixteenth year of independence from white minority rule yesterday with an announcement that the Government was to seize 23 white-owned farms to resettle black peasants (Jan Raath writes). This is the second attempt by President Mugabe to nationalise the 123,000 acres.

Niarchos buried with third wife

Lausanne: Stavros Niarchos, 86, the Greek shipping tycoon, was buried in a plain wooden coffin in this Swiss city beside Evgenia Livanos, the "only woman he ever loved". She was the third of his five wives. About 50 mourners, including exiled King Constantine, attended a service. (Reuters)

19 shot dead in Brazilian clash

Brasilia: At least 19 people died in a shootout between landless rural workers and police on a remote Amazon highway in the northern Brazilian state of Para, officials said. Police were trying to disperse 2,000 demonstrators pressing land claims. (Reuters)

Jackson 'cover-up over boys'

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

BODYGUARDS working for Michael Jackson took part in a cover-up to protect the pop singer while he entertained young boys in his bedroom, it is claimed.

Court papers in Los Angeles detail the activities of Jackson's private police force, the

Office of Special Services, which allegedly intimidated other members of his entourage and told them not to talk about things seen at his Neverland Ranch.

The papers have been filed in a suit by Jerome Johnson, a 6ft 8in former Jackson bodyguard claiming unspecified damages for unfair dismissal. He says that during Jackson's

1992 Dangerous world tour, boys as young as ten spent the night in the singer's quarters.

The star's head of security was told "to do whatever necessary to protect Jackson from being charged or convicted of child molestation".

The singer, who recently split from his wife Lisa-Marie Presley, could not be reached for comment.

Outraged Chinese historians insist Marco Polo went east

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN QUANZHOU, CHINA

SCHOLARS and officials in Quanzhou, which Marco Polo described as rivaling Alexandria as one of the two busiest of the world's entrepôts, yesterday rejected a British historian's suggestions that the Venetian traveller never visited China, and said they were considering raising a statue of him here.

In her book *Did Marco Polo Go to China?*, Frances Wood, head of the Chinese department at the British Library, maintains that Polo's cellmate in Genoa probably invented most of the tale while Polo was in jail in 1296, during Genoa's war with Venice.

Dr Wood said that, although Polo claimed to have spent a great deal of time in China, he had not described the Great Wall, porcelain, Chinese pictograms, foot-binding or tea drinking. She also pointed out that Chinese accounts of the period talk of many foreigners who visited the country, but do not mention Polo.

"We are convinced Marco Polo did visit China and was here in Quanzhou," said Wang Lian Mao, 54, curator of the Sea Communications Museum here, where there is a bronze head of Marco Polo on display. "We believe his history to be true."

Mr Wang is a historian whose museum contains tombstones and other relics of early foreign residents, such as Muslim traders from Persia and later those of Spanish travellers. He said that in the 13th century Quanzhou was known as Zaytun — a word from which "satin" originated — and was rich, attracting

Hole in the Polo legend: did he ever go to China?

The Times report on Dr Wood's scepticism

traders from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Later its harbour silted up and it lost influence.

He said discussions were going on about the possibility of setting up a statue to Marco Polo in this port, which is unsettled and eagerly seeking investment as part of China's programme of economic reform. Mr Wang said that Marco Polo's contribution to Chinese historians' knowledge

of China when it was ruled by the Yuan, grandson of Genghis Khan, the Mongol invader, was considerable. He cited Polo's reports on taxation at Zaytun being higher than in other Chinese port cities.

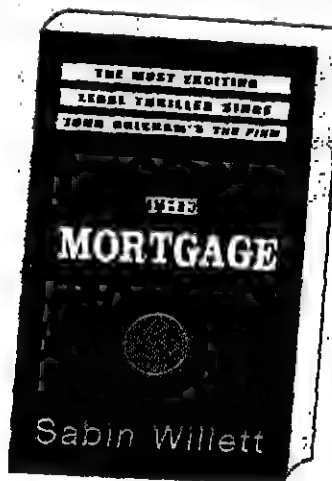
In his book, *Description of the World*, which chronicles his travels from 1271 to 1295, during which he served as an ambassador of Kublai Khan, whose summer palace he visited at Xanadu, Polo called Zaytun a splendid city inhabited by a "peaceable folk, fond of easy living".

That Polo had not mentioned tea drinking in his account, Mr Wang said, was explained because "possibly tea at that time was not as popular as today".

On his failure to refer to the binding of the feet of women Zhu Xun-min, a local official, said that women with bound feet would have been kept at home, forbidden to go out.

As to the fact that Polo did not describe the Great Wall of China, another official said: "The Great Wall was built to keep Mongols out. It may be that Kublai did not want his Italian guest to see this, perhaps fearing it gave a negative impression of the Mongols as barbarians."

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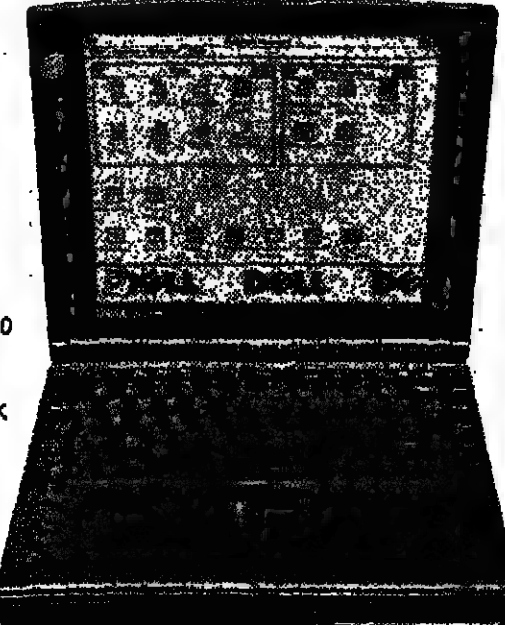


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Giles Coren identifies Sad Gap Syndrome

The truth about Tony Blair's legs

Anything John Major can do, Tony Blair can do slightly differently. Prior to his 1992 election victory Mr Major appeared in public with his pants showing — the media went wild, the pants went back inside the trousers, and returning to Government was routine.

It would be far too obvious for Mr Blair to repeat exactly the same stunt before the next election. The old pants trick never works twice. So he has committed a new underwear-related faux pas.

Sitting cross-legged next to the most powerful man in the world, he leant back, crossed his left leg over his right, the trouser rode up, and there was a flash of Blair leg, pink and hairy, above the sock. Mr Clinton's leg stayed hidden, for he wore the longer sock always favoured by the well-dressed gentleman.

Sad Gap Syndrome: look around your own office, there is always one. It is an error that Michael Heseltine, for example, would never have made. He is famous for the length of his socks, and his own calf has been seen by no one but Mrs Heseltine since 1962.

But not everyone is as well versed in etiquette. On Channel 4's *A Week in Politics*, guests sit unprotected by a table, and the show gives the electorate a unique chance to assess its representatives' hosiery. Host Andrew Rawnsley — au fait with the camera angles — is reputed to favour sock-suspenders. But guests are seldom so well prepared, and many is the hairy shin that has turned a by-election result.

The difference with the Blair debacle is that the whole world saw it. And yesterday, the shock waves were still rippling through the menswear community.

For Sir Hardy Arncliffe the showing of flesh between trouser and sock is the very worst sartorial crime imaginable. "I have never worn a short sock in my life," he insists. "A gentleman's sock comes over the calf. To wear anything that stops shorter is quite frightful. I can impress this upon you best by saying that in Italy, where correct dress is terribly important, one of the worst things you can call a man is a *mezza calza*, a 'half-socker'. It means, in short, naff."

He was, he said, wearing calf-length ribbed socks at that moment. "They can also be plain, but the length is a legacy of their descent from the stockings gentlemen wore

with knee breeches. That is why one wears long, black silk socks in the evening."

In Jeremy Farrell's indispensable study, *Socks and Stockings* (Batsford 1992), we learn that during the second half of the 19th century men's socks were mostly invisible because of the fashion for high boots, thereby befuddling the issue until the First World War. Late in the century, however, as the shoe was set to make a comeback, dozens of patents were filed for sock-suspenders that claimed not to cut off circulation.

We also hear of a low point in 1914 when a young man in Indianapolis slashed his trousers to the knee to reveal red silk stockings. He was arrested, of course, and when he argued that he should enjoy the same rights as women

who wore split skirts, the women around him declared that it was "indecent, inarticulate, and hardly decent for men to show legs practically bare from the knees downwards". Mr Blair's advisers did well, then, to keep him away from Indiana.

You certainly won't see a male shin in Jermyn Street. At Turnbull and Asser all the socks are three-quarter length. "I suppose they sell short socks in Marks & Spencer, but not in Jermyn Street," says Stewart, their chief sock man. "We do stock sock-suspenders, but there is not much call for them any more."

Lord Hailsham has gone on record saying that he always wears them, but it is not a fashion that impresses Sir Hardy. "I don't think I have ever worn them. You can do whatever you like with your socks, though, so long as you are not showing flesh."

No one would be fool enough to quibble with him on a matter of this delicacy, but this is 1996. Social conventions and ancient proprieties are all waiting for a new dawn. There was a time when the displaying of a lady's midriff would have been laughable. But today that little flash, accompanied ideally by a pierced navel, is the very height of elegance.

Surely men should not be left out of the fun? If every gap must have its day, perhaps Tony Blair has signalled the acceptability of a new flash of revealed flesh. Sir Hardy doubts it.

"It has never been acceptable," he says. "And it never will be. You either dress like a gentleman, or you don't give a damn."



Flashing: Tony Blair in Washington



The leafy approach to Radnage, and (inset) Janet Brown: the identity of her killer is still keenly debated by villagers, who favour the lover theory

Murder in the village

Janet Brown was brutally murdered in her home a year ago this month. She is buried just outside the low, ivy-covered walls in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, in Radnage, Buckinghamshire. The grave, which is covered in bunches of daffodils and carnations, is not marked by a headstone: the ground is not yet settled enough. A tiny wooden stake, marked "J. Brown", is the only testament to the body lying there.

The church is surrounded by rolling fields, patches of thick woodland and scattered farmhouses. Many of the families who live here are refugees from the city, who chose Radnage for its remoteness and tranquillity. The village is too small to have a shop, and for the sprawling, ancient properties surrounded by acres of land there are no house numbers, only names.

It would be the ideal setting for an Agatha Christie novel,

but in real life no one could have dreamt of the events of April 10, 1995, when Mrs Brown, 51, a loving mother of three, was bludgeoned to death in the living room of Hall Farm. Her body was discovered the following morning: naked, handcuffed and gagged.

At first, the explanation seemed clear. Mrs Brown, who had been home alone that night, had surprised a burglar, who had panicked and killed her. Over the years, there had been a spate of burglaries in the area. Hall Farm, which had been the family home for ten years, had recently been put on the market for £345,000. Although set close to the road, it was surrounded by 11 acres of open land, over which a thief could easily have approached undetected.

Mrs Brown, who had just resumed work as a research nurse in Oxford, was so anxious about theft that she had pioneered a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Nine years before she had surprised a burglar, and as a result had acquired a Great Dane called Carly, which had died the year before and had not been replaced.

Yet the burglar theory quickly began to show flaws. Mrs Brown had spent the last night of her life at home alone. Her husband, Grahaem, worked in Switzerland as a medical scientist for the pharmaceutical giant Ciba Geigy. Her daughter Zara, 22, a languages graduate, was working in London; Dominic, 21, was a student at Exeter University. Her youngest child, Roxane, 17, had announced earlier that day that she would be spending the night with friends.

That evening Mrs Brown ate a small meal and at about 3pm she spoke to a friend of Roxane's on the telephone. When her builder rang at 8.20pm, there was no reply. In this time an intruder — almost certainly a man — must have broken through the side patio doors and attacked her in her bedroom, where masking tape was found. At 10.20pm, a passerby heard the external alarm ringing, which cut off automatically after 20 minutes.

Little adds up. If Mrs Brown heard smashing glass at around 8.15pm, why did the alarm, which was triggered by buttons next to her bed and the front door, not sound for nearly another two hours? Most killers would have fled at the sound of an alarm, although the police have not discounted the theory that the killer, for some unknown reason, set it off himself.

The method of entry was complicated. A video and television were unplugged, but nothing had been stolen. Two cars were parked in the drive, the curtains downstairs were open and lights were on throughout the house. Mrs Brown was bound, gagged and helpless, but she was killed anyway.

"On balance, I don't think the motive was burglary. If a burglar did it, it wasn't a half decent one," says Detective Superintendent Michael Short of Thames Valley Police, who has been in charge of the

investigation since it opened.

Since then dozens of theories have been entertained, but none makes complete sense. There was no sign of a struggle. Although Mrs Brown was naked, she had not been raped, tortured or sexually assaulted. Furthermore, she had not been stripped: her clothes were neatly folded at the side of her bed.

"I can't understand that," says one police officer who worked on the case. "She may have gone to bed naked and been woken by the sound of breaking glass, but no woman goes to confront an intruder without putting something on. She would feel far too vulnerable."

Reluctantly, police and villagers have come to the conclusion that the murderer may be living in the community, protected by friends and family. "We feel that this is the case, because of the location," says Detective Superintendent Short. "It's someone who's either lived or worked in the area. I don't know if he was known to Mrs Brown."

The worry of burglary aside, villagers seem more inflamed than terrified at the idea of a killer hiding in their midst.

"There's nothing to be afraid of," says one neighbour, who like everyone I spoke to declined to be named. "We are sure that the murderer knew Janet Brown, she let him into the house. Her husband was working away, and we all reckon she had a bit on the side."

Once Dr Brown, who had a solid alibi, had been eliminated from police inquiries, the lover theory seemed the most likely option. Certainly, this is the

favourite theory in Radnage. Yet police have been unable to uncover any evidence of a secret life.

Mrs Brown, it transpires, was a friendly, pleasant but reserved woman. Even those who considered her a close friend admit that she never discussed personal matters. Many in the village had speculated before the killing that the distance between Dr and Mrs Brown was more than geographical, but the

house was being sold so she could join her husband in Switzerland.

Over the past year, Mr Short's team have interviewed 2,700 witnesses and discussed the case with dozens of psychologists, psychiatrists and offender profilers. "I have got my own views as a result of speaking to these people, but it would be unhelpful for me to go ahead and give my theories," he says.

The likelihood of obtaining any more solid evidence is fading. "As time goes by, we have got to be less confident about ever solving this," says Mr Short. "But we still have people working on inquiries and we are optimistic about two anonymous calls we have had from someone who appears to have information."

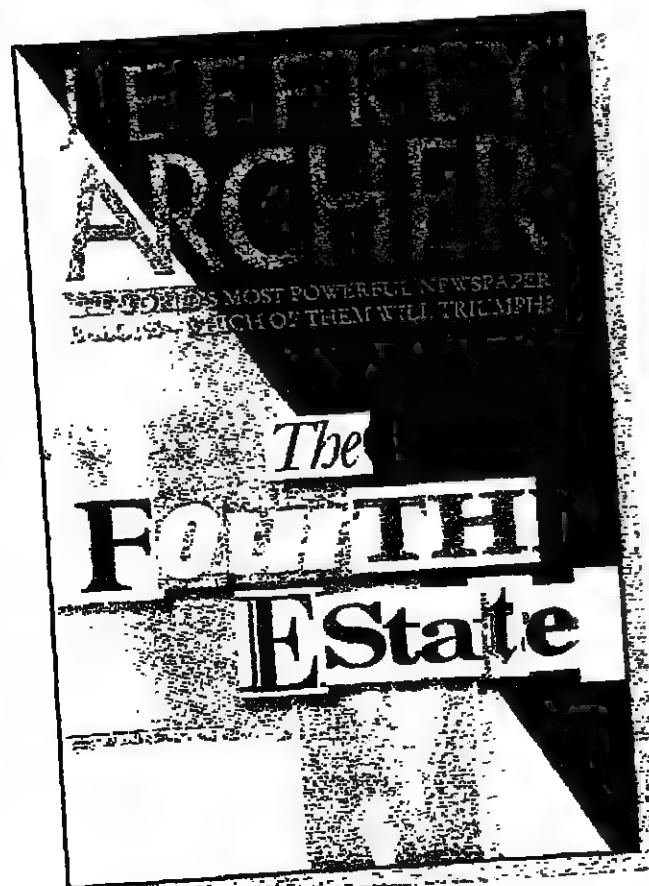
After the long winter, spring has come to Radnage. Lambs are in the fields, pheasants peck at the verges and laughing groups of teenagers on horseback trot in single file along the winding lanes. These are the sights that Mrs Brown would have enjoyed as she drove home from work on the last Monday of her life. Hall Farm has been sold and is now called Cabbage Hall, its original name. Builders are working on the house and a large slip lies in the drive. And the Brown family are trying to come to terms with the fact that they may never know what happened to an adored wife and mother one evening last April.

'No woman confronts an intruder naked'

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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The former casting director who has £32 million of lottery cash to spend on her biggest production — turning Colditz-on-Thames into a place of beauty

The former casting director who has £32 million of lottery cash to spend on her biggest production — turning Colditz-on-Thames into a place of beauty

Sir Denys Lasdun, the architect, now 82, also passionately loves his building. His acrimonious views of the proposed changes are well known. He thinks they will wreck his facade and ruin the interior

His protests have obliged them to abandon a plan of removing the upper walkway. "He took very strong exception to that. It was very important to him — and he is entitled to be," says the architect.

— "I think it is an interesting question," says Ms. McIntosh carefully, "to what extent the original architect of a building owns it. A building grows into itself, and

She points out that people have never quite "got" the building, since it cannot properly be seen, except from the other side of Waterloo bridge, a striking vision at night. And to see the wonderful views you have to stand in the middle of

After the interview I went to a preview of *The Prince's Play* (Hugo's *Le Roi S'Amuse*, in a Tony Harrison translation). It was Saturday night: cold, blustery. The approach was, as ever, dominated by dustbins, parked motorcycles, generators, ugliness. Everyone arriving tried to get in by the wrong door, but nothing outside said a "Welcome."

When McAlpine's began work in 1969, it was the biggest theatre ever built in Britain, costing £16 million. Everything went wrong: a shortage of building labour, fallings-out between architect and builder, troublesome stage machinery like the Olivier's notorious drum revolve. The delays re-

Genista — the name comes from *Planta genista*, emblem of the Plantagenets, a kind of broom —

was brought up, the eldest of five, in a Hertfordshire village called Little Gaddesden, fringed by spectacular National Trust-owned beechwoods. "And of course like all children brought up in beautiful places, I never gave it a moment's thought." Her father was active in local drama, and took her to Stratford, so the theatre seeped into her bloodstream.

Skilled casting is hard to explain, but in her long years at the RSC (where she rose to be part of the ruling triumvirate with Adrian Noble and Michael Attenborough) she had a hand in many an inspired casting, eg. the 22-year-old Ken Branagh, whom she had seen at the tiny Upstream theatre, as Henry V. In 1990 she heard that David Aukin was leaving the National and "I shamefully jumped ship. I had to come here. I said to Adrian, it was the only job in the world that would have made me leave. He had every reason to be furious, but he was brilliant — generous and upstanding."

She lives in Kentish Town with daughter and son and regards her life as charmed. She had just viewed the designs for the new Stephen Poliakoff play, and was off to a run-through of the new Wallace Shawn play with Miranda Richardson and Mike Nichols, directed by David Har-

"Tonight I shall go to the Almeida, or to *Fidelio* at ENO. I very much like going to the theatre on my own. You don't have any responsibility for anyone else's enjoyment. It's a completely private pleasure."

About the lottery she confessed to the usual misgiving that funds committed through the Treasury might in future diminish, making the arts vulnerable to lottery volatility. "But of course this money could not conceivably be produced by any other means, so you can't be churlish. There will be dramatic

Was it "Cindy" or a more Windsorly details of that teatime tryst are doubtless lost for good. When impressive tenor, the ne

Was it "Cindy" or a more Winsorily "Miss Crawford" when Prince William took tea with the Hollywood babe? To whom fell the conversational initiative: the future heir to the Throne or the princess of the silver screen? Who poured? One aches to know, but the

details of that teatime tryst are doubtless lost for good. When a young man meets his pin-up, his grey matter can turn to soup. At such times, as any survivor of male adolescence will concur, your hands tend to flail, probably clobbering the sugar bowl. Your voice cracks. One moment it is as

Miss Crawford will be far too ladylike to spoon the goods on what occurred in that Kensington Palace drawing room. Did she curtsy on introduction, thus allowing young shorty a glimpse of

Our royals are masters of small talk, but here was a test. Even the most-travelled Lothario would need to prepare well his opening gambit with such a beauty.

Cynics may say this was a blatant publicity stunt to portray the prince as blökish. They would be wrong, for with that single assignation, Prince William has surely stoked the envy of British men far more than have any number of weekends at Sandringham or rides in an open landau. Footmen? Palaces? Rides on Concordo? So be it. But hot-buttered toast with supermodel Cindy? Grrrr.

Pop — the Eton Pop, that is — will be sure to debrief young Windsor at the start of summer half. A full and frank appraisal of his tea guest's political views will be sought, along with any other insights the young man can offer. One has to wonder at the sense of introducing a boy to his pin-up. What happens if she turns out to have feet of clay? It could unbalance a lad.

But that is unlikely. I bet
linda Crawford gave the
westrucked William a terrific
pink at the end of tea.
ensing Palace has heard
few meaty yelps in its day,
ut I wager that after tea had
been cleared, and after nice
Miss Crawford had been
down to the door, the royal
eves resounded to the loud-
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Philip Howard



You think hamburgers are junk, eh? Not so fast, you wimpy snobs

It would be helpful if Franz Fischer, the Agriculture Commissioner of the EU, could now declare that he "would not worry" about eating British hamburgers. For hamburgers are deemed as junk, convenience food. Food snobs assert that the brains of modern youth have been rotted by a continuous diet of hamburgers. And it is certainly offensive to scoff at hamburgers (or anything else) in the street, the Tube or other public places not meant for eating. But war babies brought up with rationing eat fast, polish their plates clean, and remember the arrival of hamburgers in Britain as a blessed relief from continual hunger, powdered egg, Woolton pies (in which rats' claws were folklore) and whale steaks. And a proper hamburger, to be found at Tooties and Fortnum & Mason (if you are prepared to wait for them to kill the fatted bullock), is one of the great urban dishes of the world.

For hamburger climbs Mount Improbable in history as well as taste. The original hamburger was a German sausage named after the port where it was invented (cf. Frankfurt). But the recipe of a small cake of minced beef, grilled or fried, is ancient. It goes back to Aristophanes and Apicius, the Roman Mr Beeton. The dish was just waiting for a name. And the mince meat that became the modern hamburger originated in the Baltic, or perhaps in the Russian *bitok*, a beef cake. This was adopted as a conveniently packaged form of meat by the seamen of Hamburg (cf. the Cornish pasty), and they took it with them when they emigrated to America. It first turns up in English texts in 1899 as *Hamburger steak*. The 1904 St Louis World's Fair, where visitors discovered it in herds, propelled the hamburger towards its destiny as the quintessential fast food. And it was adopted as the main staple in the new fast-food chains. The White Castle chain was the first in 1921. McDonald's opened in 1940.

So at some time in the Thirties, the first Wimpy was created in Chicago. Like Coca-Cola and other such mass-market foods and drinks, it boasted of "secret" spices and bread baked to a carefully guarded recipe. Wimpy also crossed with that other 20th-century phenomenon that was growing as fast as fast-food chains: the comic strip and cartoon film. Its eponym was J. Wellington Wimpy, a friend of Popeye.

The form of a Popeye cartoon was as strict as that of a Bach fugue. There was a gentle introduction with Pluto, Popeye's dog, and Olive Oyl, his skinny girlfriend. Wimpy would buy a hamburger with some such stock phrase as, "Wimpy is the name, sir. J. Wellington Wimpy, or, 'I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today'." Thereafter, often in a nautical setting, Popeye would start to be beaten up by Bluto, the baddy with a black beard, or the piratical crew of an opposing ship. He was in real trouble. But at that moment he found a tin of spinach, a coherent, viscous, seagreen fluid, and emptied it into his mouth. His triceps swelled, and the opposition was annihilated. As the spinach poured in, the leitmotif swelled like his triceps, and Popeye had won. For Popeye was a herbivore. "I'm Popeye the sailorman. (Repeat). On cabbage and spinach. My powers don't diminish. I'm Popeye the sailorman."

The Popeye cartoon of the inspired runt who wallops the giant is one of the fundamental plots in fiction, since David v Goliath and Odysseus v the world. It is why romantics support Frank Bruno. From the popularity of Popeye's Ur-strip-cartoon in the *Daily Mirror*, the Wellington bomber which led British raids into Germany in the war was also nicknamed the Wimpy. J. Wellington Wimpy's passion for hamburgers has now occupied every corner of the world, including Russia. Even France has *le hamburger*. The suffix *-burger* has produced as many new forms as the *-gate* in *Watergate*. So we have cheeseburgers, baconburgers, eggburgers, steakburgers, porkburgers, mouseburgers, chefburgers, and jumboburgers. Even Popeye could eat nutburgers, vegburgers and spinachburgers. Burger on its own has become a respectable word. And, *pape* Popeye, the fast-food thousand-island publicists, food snobs and the wimps of the EU, a rare hamburger with red relish is fine food and revealing social history.



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Blair will win — and fail

In the last of his series, Anatole Kaletsky sees Labour as the party of public service

The parody that helped Margaret Thatcher to win the 1979 election was of the Labour Government's reflex reaction to every political challenge: invite the trade union barons for beer and sandwiches at Downing Street and agree a "social contract". The parody that promises to play a similar role in the 1997 election is of the Tories' answer to every problem they have faced. From controlling health costs and running the railways to organising the National Lottery, chasing up errant fathers or stopping prison escapes, the solution has always seemed the same: hire management consultants, hold an auction, put the chief executive on performance-related pay and announce a "market solution". For better or worse, the Tory panaceas of privatisation and competition now command almost as little public confidence as the tripartite deals of the old corporate state.

For Tony Blair, Britain's disenchantment with market fundamentalism is a godsend, as he tries with one hand to suppress Labour's "tax and spend" image while with the other he holds out to the electorate some policies that look fresh and new. The disenchantment less him carve out a large field of policies — on accountable government, constitutional reform, the quality of life and the spirit of public service in health, education and welfare — which Tory commercialism cannot reach. The new policies for what Labour describes as "community building" need not cost large sums. And best of all, Labour might set up a political contest with the Tories well away from the economic battlefields on which it could very well still lose.

Labour has announced several policies which could fundamentally change Britain's system of government and affect the quality of life. It has firm plans to devolve power closer to the people by offering national assemblies to Scotland and Wales and creating a regional council for London, while keeping its options open on regional assemblies for the rest of England. It has offered a Bill of Rights and a radical opening up of government — which, to judge by history, it might live to regret in office. A plan to reform the House of Lords may cost it dearly in terms of parliamentary time, but will probably corner the Tories into defending the indefensible, in the shape of hereditary voting rights.

In other areas of public life, Labour should also be able to steal a march on

the Tories, whose dedication to private market solutions to all possible problems has thwarted sensible thinking in many areas of policy, such as university funding, public transport, competition policy, infrastructure investment, pensions and health. As one business leader remarked to me when I asked him why the Tories had failed so badly in transport policy (which industrialists generally rank as the Government's second biggest failure, after education): "To deal with transport you need a national strategic plan, and all three of those words are anathema to the Tories."

On law and order, Labour may end up adding little to Mr Blair's famous slogan — "tough on crime, and tough on the causes of crime" — but it has published some detailed plans to deal with young offenders, as well as to streamline the courts, and to break down restrictive practices in the legal profession, so improving the public's access to legal aid.

But far more important politically than any specific policies put forward by the Labour Party is its claim to a new way of thinking about public services. "We will be just as determined to squeeze efficiency out of the public sector as the Tories, because we really really believe in these public services and want them to deliver results," one Labour politician told me. But the party believes it can achieve efficiency not by bribing or intimidating teachers, doctors and policemen, but by sending them a long-forgotten message: we will give you an honorable place in the community and restore your pride.

As one Labour adviser put it: "Why was the Prussian Army better than the Italian Army? And why were both better than a bunch of mercenaries? That is one of the most interesting questions in politics. The Tories do not even understand what it means."

With some more eloquence and refine-

ment, Labour could make an ideological breakthrough with its promises on devotion, democratic accountability and the spirit of public service. But could Labour win on the basis of social issues, when these are finally weighed against the pocketbook issues of its still uncertain policies on tax and the doubts about its strategy for business? The answer is probably yes, since elections are not always won on pocketbook issues — especially Labour victories.

What happens in government is another matter. Once Mr Blair arrives in Downing Street, economic realities will loom large, along with the other black hole in his policy: Europe.

If European monetary union goes ahead in 1999, will Labour join? I believe the answer is yes. Its motive would be not just misplaced internationalist idealism, but also fear.

Every Labour Government from Ramsay MacDonald's onwards has been crippled by a sterling crisis — in 1931, 1949, 1967 and 1976 — and these crises go a

long way to explain why Labour has never governed for two full consecutive terms. What better way could there be to avoid the risk of another sterling crisis than simply to abolish sterling?

A second reason why Mr Blair is likely to join a single currency is that Labour is instinctively pro-European, and becoming more so. Although it is still deeply divided over Europe, the generational structure of the split is the opposite of that in the Tory party. The Euro-sceptics in the Tory party are in the coming generation, whereas in Labour the anti-Europeans are concentrated on the ageing left wing.

The greatest threat in office to Labour's social idealism will be the basic facts of economic life. Materialism may detract from the sense of public service, but experience shows that in the end

money is the most effective way of motivating people and competition is better at improving efficiency than exhortation. A Labour government will find public-sector workers demanding more money, as well as higher status. It will find costs soaring if competitive tendering and privatisation are abandoned. It will find huge inefficiencies in the public sector which it must root out. And it will find the business community fighting back against regulation, avoiding taxes and defending shareholders' rights.

Sooner or later Mr Blair will also face the nemesis of every government: the need to manage the business cycle, which neither inflation targets nor monetary union can ultimately avoid.

In the election, however, such concerns are likely to be forgotten. As the economy improves, the economic issues on which Labour's policies are most dubious may actually loom less large in the public mind, while the preservation and improvement of public services will seem more important. Ironically for the Tories, the more the economic situation improves, the more voters may feel they can afford the risk of voting Labour.

Every Labour Government of the past — MacDonald's in 1924 and 1929, Atlee's in 1945 and Wilson's in 1964 — was elected at a time of relative prosperity and optimism, rather than of fear and gloom. The only partial exception to this rule was Wilson's second Government, elected in the peculiar circumstances of the miners' strike in 1974.

On balance, then, Mr Blair does look extremely likely to be elected. What, then will he really do? In the past week, I have tried to present as many of his policies as possible without degenerating into laundry-lists. But in the end a government's success or failure is determined not by its manifesto. The real challenge begins when a new prime minister arrives in Downing Street to be confronted with economic crises, splits in the Cabinet and unpredictable world events.

So will Mr Blair prove more successful than John Major in handling the unexpected? We know very well about Mr Major's record; time will tell about Mr Blair. Experience shows that most political careers end in failure — and that the voters are quicker to turn on Labour governments than Tory ones. But a vote for Labour has always been a triumph of hope over experience. And what is life without hope?



KALETSKY'S LABOUR

Palace Day

IN DENMARK, they are staggered at our collective tight-fistedness towards the Queen, who will celebrate her 70th birthday on Sunday with no gift from the nation. The Danes, by contrast, have just handed over the keys to a renovated palace to Queen Margrethe as a present on her 56th birthday.

State, corporate and public donors pitched in £14 million to redecorate the Christian VII Palace in Copenhagen for the Queen. Work has been going on for 14 years and involved the shipping in of acres of pink Italian marble with His and Hers monograms for the Queen and her husband, Prince Henrik.

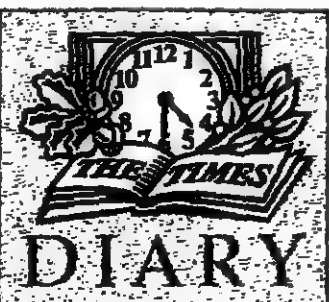
It was like a scene from Hans Christian Andersen, with gnomes of the Danish Government tearing up the bill that it would otherwise have sent to the monarch for the decorating. The Queen herself helped out, by overseeing the design of the locks on the doors connecting the palace to her neighbouring main residence.

"While everyone was saying congratulations," reported the Danish press, "the Queen was very sweet and said, 'For me, this is palace day.'"

It is lucky the Danes did not hire Anouska Hempel, one-time model and wife of the financier Sir Mark Weinberg, to do their painting and decorating. Miss Hempel, who is big in the decorating business, is interviewed in the latest *Vogue* about her new hotel, called, with a touching modesty, the Hempel. Her rooms are tastefully painted in a variety of shades including



Hempel but not homespun



"bone, tea-stain, osprey dribble and the colour of flood damage."

Cheap shot

GUN ACTIVISTS have been having fun at the expense of Haley Barbour, chairman of America's Republican Party. A lobby group, Gun Owners of America, circulated its members with Barbour's phone number, urging them to call him to berate him about America's forthcoming anti-terrorism Bill, which will complicate life for the innocent sportsman.

Barbour had so many rambling protest calls — many of them beginning with a Southern drawl of "Now look here, boy" — that he changed his number. But a deep throat has now leaked the new Barbour number to Gun Owners, which has in turn circulated the up-to-date number too.

Result: a thousand index fingers dialled the new number, followed, not much later, by a Vesuvian explosion from Barbour, who is fast developing a nervous twitch.

Newly proud

LANDSEER'S lions in Trafalgar Square are going in for a grooming. The pride of four that guard the base of Nelson's Column have lasted well since being cast in 1867. There is no record of their having had to be spruced up before, despite enduring the daily humiliation of hordes of grunting tourists clambering onto their backs and leaving their chewing-gum.



"I think it's a Redwood"

Each of the 20ft bronzes will need three weeks of treatment under scaffolding, and the operation will cost the Department of National Heritage £25,000. "We are just repainting the pockmarks and bald patches," says a heritage-wallah, "but we don't want to stop people climbing on the lions."

With Lord Archer placing high-risk bets with Sir James Goldsmith on the number of votes the Referendum Party might win, it seems appropriate that Conservatives Abroad have relocated their North American HQ to Las Vegas. Sadly set away from the showgirls and casinos, the CA office is the spare room of John Lennon. 52, a systems analyst from Southall and chairman of CA's Nevada chapter. "Conservatives Abroad is here because I work here," says a jumpy Lennon, who helps experts to register to vote in British elections. "We have nothing to do with the gaming industry — or the Beatles."

Tickety boo

THESPIAN etiquette was trampled on the other night by the American playwright Neil Simon. He turned up at the Gielgud Theatre, bought himself a ticket to his own play, *Chapter Two*, and slipped unrecognized into his seat.



Neil Simon: bad form

After the show, he decided to pop backstage to see the cast, which includes Sharon Gless, formerly Cagney of *Cagney and Lacey*, and Tom Conti. Bad idea.

Actors react to such lightning visits with all the control of startled nudists. "Sharon was very upset," says a source in the wings. "Simon had not told anybody he was coming, bought a ticket under another name, and was recognised by no one front of house except a Big Issue vendor outside."

America misses the EU's trick

Washington looks the other way, says

Jeffrey Gedmin

Americans have been reluctant internationalists ever since the country's first President, George Washington, warned his infant nation against foreign entanglements. In some ways it is no surprise that the new Europe, lacking a menacing Soviet threat, hardly entices Americans. After all, the US is not a member of the EU, nor does it aspire to be one.

The present inter-governmental conference is unlikely to attract any more attention in America than the Maastricht treaty did. Too bad. The greatest voluntary transfer of sovereignty in history takes place on a continent where America has massive investment and trade interests, a continent that has gobbled up American blood and treasure in this century through two hot wars and one cold, and where 20,000 American troops have recently been deployed to help to bring peace to the Balkans. You would think Americans would pay a little closer attention to the reorganisation of Europe.

Yet Washington is looking the other way: to the Far East, the Middle East, southern Africa, Bosnia — anywhere but the EU. *Foreign Affairs*, America's leading establishment journal on international relations, has devoted barely 10 per cent of its articles to European issues over the past five years. Neither *The Washington Post* nor *The New York Times* has a correspondent in Brussels. The Clinton Administration's feelings about European federalism are unmistakably warm, but entirely vague. "We want Europe to be strong," says the President, "that is why America supports Europe's steps towards greater unity." Yet not even *Brookings Review*, with its close ties to the Democratic Party, has published a single article on monetary union since the Maastricht treaty was signed in 1991.

"Explaining the EU to an American is like explaining cricket to an American," quips a British journalist. Debates over majority voting and the powers of the European Commission, the parliament, and the Council of Ministers often seem obscure (and not just to Americans), but the stakes are high for America, too.

In Washington recently, John Redwood made some crowd-pleasing speeches against Europe's paternalistic, interventionist welfare states, in an attempt to drum up support among American conservatives for British Euro-scepticism. He was flattered by the attention of Newt Gingrich, but this probably reflected the fact that the Republican House Speaker's press spokesman, Tony Blankley, is British. Similarly, John O'Sullivan, the British-born editor of the influential conservative magazine *National Review*, is the guiding force behind the "New Atlantic Initiative", a project to be christened with a major conference in Prague next month. O'Sullivan's aim is to stimulate fresh debate about EU and NATO enlargement, about the future of Europe and America's role there.

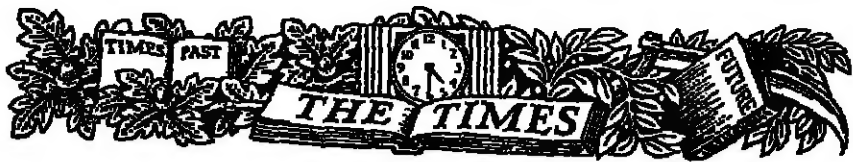
Many Americans remain uncertain of what European federalism will mean for them. "The whole Maastricht process is just not on our screen," says a Democrat working for the House International Affairs Committee, "unless it's how Europe screwed up on Bosnia." The path towards monetary union has raised serious questions about sovereignty and democracy in Europe. It is of course primarily a political project, as its proponents readily confess. But populist demagogues on the Continent and the obstinate British are not the only ones who should be wondering why it is necessary or desirable to transfer so many powers to supranational institutions. Helmut Kohl, who wants to be chancellor of European unification, suggests that the alternative is a return to nationalism and war. Americans know this is nonsense. Nation states and nationalism are not the same thing. Americans ought to ponder what will happen if the campaign to bring Europe closer together succeeds in doing just the opposite.

A common foreign and security policy will be a prime topic of discussion at this year's inter-governmental conference. It is intended to mean cohesion, power and greater effectiveness, which the Clinton Administration favours. It means burden-sharing, and should mean less for America to do. Strobe Talbot, Clinton's Deputy Secretary of State, has argued that the EU might pave the way as a model for globalism. He even gushed about federalism "as the basis for global government". Even Henry Kissinger likes the idea that a US Secretary of State could make one phone call to consult the Europeans — and the European Commission is already proposing a single foreign representative to speak on the EU's behalf. But what would it mean for America if such a policy were to paralyse countries which in the past have been important partners of the United States? Mithallising the Atlantic alliance before anything meaningful can replace it should worry us all.

Despite all the questions, European federalism is on the march. The Franco-German corps will be one day transformed into a European army. "Eventually, we will opt for our own defence," the Dutch European Commissioner, Hans van den Broek, said recently. If so, this too is something Americans ought to start considering now. But there is little sign that the penny has dropped — yet.

The author is a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

P.H.S



LOOKING-GLASS LABOUR

Blair is keeping his party, as well as the public, in the dark

For the past few weeks, our economics editor, Anatole Kaletsky, has been submerged in policy documents, speeches and position papers from the Labour Party. His task, as expounded over the past week in *The Times*, was to determine as accurately as he could what Tony Blair would do in government. The results have been illuminating and, to many perhaps, unexpected.

What has surprised many readers is how much policy has actually been made; so often Labour is accused of Blairism. The charge has stuck, however, because there are still so many critical details to be inserted. As the outlines of Labour's less contentious policies sharpen, the gaps stand out more glaringly.

At some point between now and the next election, Mr Blair will have to solve the West Lothian question, suggest a structure for personal taxation, fix a minimum wage, set a level for public spending and decide whether to drop Britain's veto in Europe on social issues. The question is: at what stage should these details emerge?

Some of them are genuinely not yet decided. Labour still has not found a formula for devolution. On the others, there is an official Labour line and a real Labour line. Officially Labour argues that to reveal its most sensitive policy details now would lay them open to Tory distortion. In reality the silence is a delaying tactic. Labour leaders are determined first to sail peacefully through this autumn's party conference and Shadow Cabinet elections; then they can make *ex cathedra* announcements about the most contentious parts of the party platform; and after that Mr Blair can more safely hold his referendum of party members on the manifesto.

To understand this plan, it is important to distinguish between different layers of the Labour Party. The Shadow Cabinet is only about a third Blairite but at least, theoretic-

cally, it is bound by collective responsibility. The parliamentary Labour Party also has Blairites in the minority. Fewer than half the activists and trade unionists who attend conference are converted to their leaders' way of thinking. Mr Blair's only certain majority is among party members in the country, who are solidly behind him, and should demonstrate their support in the referendum. That is why he is going over the heads of MPs and activists to cement his programme.

Mr Blair will naturally have fears about the alarm his intended personal tax rates could arouse in voters. What is probably closer to his mind is the way in which they will infuriate members of his own party.

His silence, however, has enabled Tories to claim that Labour has a hidden agenda. The longer that he keeps his key policy decisions hidden, the more damage that charge will bring. If Mr Blair were to announce now that he would not introduce a top tax rate of more than, say, 50 per cent and that it would not bite before, say, £50,000 or £100,000, many voters who are currently apprehensive would be reassured and others would at least know where they stood. Similarly, he could posit the maximum level of the minimum wage and the approximate level of public spending that would be needed to achieve his aims. The pressure that is already on the Tories to be more concrete in their spending and tax plans would then increase.

Mr Blair has presumably calculated that he would prefer to be attacked by Conservatives than by his own party. More than anything else, he needs to retain the semblance of unity. But this stance also makes him look as if he has something to hide from the voters, when in fact those who are being most deliberately kept in the dark are his activists, parliamentary colleagues and paymasters.

NUCLEAR TRUTHS

Time to tackle nuclear pollution with the urgency it merits

This evening President Clinton, John Major and the other Group of Seven leaders will sit down with President Yeltsin at a Kremlin banquet. It is the start of an extraordinary summit to deal with the consequences of the world's worst technological catastrophe, ten years ago in Chernobyl. They are there because the wily Russian leader, anticipating a valuable boost to his re-election campaign, last year extended an invitation that they could not refuse. But even if the pictures assist Mr Yeltsin's return to the Kremlin in June, the discussions will offer him no free ride. Nor should they.

At issue is not only Western help with nuclear decommissioning but the appalling safety record, technological blundering and obsessive secrecy that have hindered all efforts to make Russia's nuclear submarines and power stations safe. In Russia, the world now faces nuclear perils potentially thousands of times more deadly than the radioactive aftermath of the Chernobyl meltdown in Ukraine a decade ago.

It is now more than three years since the West promised substantial help to close the remaining three reactors at Chernobyl and make safe other antiquated graphite-moderated reactors. So far Russia has seen little of the \$1 billion promised, and Ukraine is still waiting for most of the \$3 billion pledged to renew the crumbling Chernobyl sarcophagus and develop new sources of energy. Experts, Russian and Western, identified the most unstable plants long ago. Too much European Union aid has been gone to expensive Western consultants, rather than actual salvage work by Russian and Ukrainian nuclear technicians and scientists.

The most valuable aid to overall nuclear safety has come from America, which has focused not on power generation but on disposing of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Since

1992, the US has committed over \$1.5 billion to transport, store and dismantle nuclear weapons, while buying up highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan and committing itself to the further purchase of 500 tonnes from Russia over the next 20 years.

In return for more effectively targeted assistance, the West is entitled to demand a minimum of co-operation and responsibility from Moscow. That has not been forthcoming. The negligence and indifference of Russian officials is breathtaking. Villagers have found waste radioactive material dumped in woods and fields. Highly enriched uranium is stored in warehouses bolted only with padlocks. Records of nuclear holdings have gone missing, and officials have been caught smuggling nuclear material to unsavoury regimes willing to pay the price. The most disturbing statistics of all are in the Kola peninsula, home to Russia's most unstable reactor, where waste from ageing nuclear icebreakers and 70 decommissioned submarines is being stored in leaking containers, disused boats or simply dumped at sea. The total fissile material around Murmansk is estimated to be more than a thousand times the yield of the largest French nuclear test at Mururoa.

Mr Yeltsin knows he needs help: Western leaders know they must spend up to £20 billion to reduce the threat to manageable levels. Yet the Russian leader has done too little to persuade a secretive military to come clean with the facts — let alone to drop the outrageous spying charges against Aleksandr Nikitin, an environmental investigator who uncovered serious official misconduct. The West, in turn, could do far more to persuade taxpayers of the urgency of the threat. Faced with a dozen more Chernobyls and other nuclear pollution, the world cannot afford half-measures and delay.

A YEAR IN OKLAHOMA

Terrorism's aftermath has been handled with care

On April 19, 1995, an enormous explosion ripped through the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City killing 168 people. The scenes amid the carnage, especially the plight of the 19 children who died in the day centre, remain haunting. The obvious shock this outrage caused in the United States, and beyond, was compounded for Americans by the discovery that the accused were not of sinister foreign extraction but came from within. No precedent existed for such home-grown terrorism, and the incident brought to public attention a network of citizens, loosely organised around the various militia movements, apparently willing to take revenge against, as they saw it, an overmighty and intrusive federal Government.

Such incidents are too often the harbingers of hysteria and reaction. That threatened to be the case also for the Oklahoma bombing. The arrival of indiscriminate violence on this scale prompted public figures, including the President, to argue that national life could never be the same again. As the United States marks this sombre anniversary, it should be noted that, so far, grief has not been translated into a misguided backlash. Interest and concern about the armed antagonism of some groups remains high, as witnessed by the present stand-off between the FBI and a set of self-styled Freemen in Montana. The trials of Timothy McVeigh and Terry

Nichols will certainly strain emotions. Public and political actions, however, have been dignified and proportionate and are set to remain so.

This week Congress finalised work on anti-terrorism legislation that will be sent to the President today. It was originally conceived in response to the 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre, and there were calls for the addition of tough provisions to counter the threat that Oklahoma appeared to represent. These would have been easy for elected officials to endorse. Instead, what has emerged is a reasonable and balanced package that strengthens the capacity of intelligence services without the drastic restrictions on individual liberties — such as a vast extension of federal wire-tapping operations and a substantially enhanced role for the military — that some had suggested. An unusual alliance of civil libertarian Democrats and Republicans blocked proposals that would have stoked rather than subdued fears about the powers of Washington. The United States Constitution has not been another victim of the blast.

Oklahoma City will stop in silence at 9.02 am local time and remain quiet for 168 seconds. The names of the dead will then be read aloud at ten-second intervals. It will be an intensely difficult day for many there and across the United States. But, by its measured response, the country is entitled to some pride to set against the pain.

Army's regret for the Cyprus killing

From the Minister of State for the Armed Forces

Sir, In his powerful and unequivocal letter to *The Times* (April 3) General Sir Michael Rose, the Adjutant General, made plain the great sense of shame and deep regret felt by the British Army over the savage and despicable killing of Louise Jensen by three British soldiers. We all share in the agony which will be felt by Miss Jensen's parents (report and leading article, April 17).

Most service personnel behave in a supremely disciplined manner, and there is no question of violent behaviour being tolerated within the military ethos. I attach the highest priority to ensuring that standards of discipline and behaviour across the three Services are maintained at an exemplary level.

Military personnel are instilled with a fierce sense of justice and discipline. There is no place in the Services for those involved in crimes of violence. Any instance of indiscipline will be treated with the utmost severity; we will not tolerate anything less than the highest possible standards of behaviour.

I offer to Miss Jensen's grieving parents, family and friends, on behalf of the Government and all British Forces, my heartfelt sympathy and regret.

I remain your obedient servant,
NICHOLAS SOAMES,
Ministry of Defence,
Main Building, Whitehall, SW1,
April 17.

From Mr Peter Almond

Sir, I am sure Mr Jim Davidson (letter, April 16) means well when he attempts to defend Brigadier Arthur Denaro's comment that the trial of three British soldiers in Cyprus was a trial of three individuals, not of the British Army. Mr Davidson's long commitment to support of troops in the field is remarkable and much appreciated.

But the fact is that soldiers are representative of the British Army, both on and off duty. They signed away their individual rights when they joined and can be ordered to battle — and to die — at any time of the Government's choosing. "Government Issue", as the Americans used to say.

This applies to bad soldiers as well as good, and the Army cannot bask in the reflected glory of good activities done privately by soldiers and then disown their bad deeds. This "ownership" of soldiers is what makes the Forces different from civilian society and is something which many people do not understand — and some in uniform — do not appear to fully understand.

I accept that there is pressure from the courts and elsewhere in society to apply civilian standards to the Services, and this is what may be causing Brigadier Denaro and other senior commanders to be confused about their control of off-duty soldiers. Soldiers are, and should be, reflective of the larger British society they represent; but society also expects them to hold to higher standards.

If this is lacking it may be that senior commanders need to examine the structure of supervision by senior non-commissioned officers and junior officers. The former have suffered heavily in manning cuts. The latter may need to pay closer attention to the American model, where junior officers are much closer to their men.

Yours faithfully,
PETER J. ALMOND,
36 Heathside,
Hitchley Wood, Esher, Surrey,
April 16.

Flick endowment

From Mrs Anneliese Berry

Sir, With reference to Oxford University's agreement to return the £350,000 Flick endowment to Balliol College (report, April 16) I wonder how many fortunes were made by British industrialists using slave labour in the West Indies, South Africa and indeed in this country and elsewhere, which were subsequently offered as "noble" endowments or foundations. I'm afraid I find the "holier than thou" attitude a little nauseating.

As for the money, may I suggest that Dr Cere-Rudolph Flick uses it to provide holidays and rehabilitation for some of the physically and mentally scarred children from former Yugoslavia.

Yours faithfully,
A. BERRY,
83 Oakley Park, Bexley, Kent,
April 16.

Railtrack offer

From Mr Harvey Cole

Sir, It appears that the directors of Railtrack will not be offered lavish share options when it is privatised. That is something of an improvement on previous self-offs.

However, they will qualify for bonus payments of up to 40 per cent for meeting "corporate and individual performance targets". This is odd. One would have thought that meeting such standards should be the minimum that was required of them.

Are employees of all rail operations to be similarly rewarded if they drive the number of trains allocated to them or punch the planned total of tickets each year? And if not, why not?

Yours &c,
HARVEY COLE,
9 Cifton Road,
Winchester, Hampshire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Continuing threat to Bosnian peace

From the President and Chief Executive of the International Crisis Group

Sir, The news that the 50-nation Bosnia aid-pledging meeting in Brussels (report, April 15) has elicited some \$1.2 billion (\$800 million) towards the reconstruction of that war-torn country is, on the face of it, encouraging.

I returned on April 13 from a visit to Bosnia where the International Crisis Group (ICG) is engaged on a project to monitor the implementation of the civilian elements of the Dayton peace agreement. This agreement and the presence of Implementation Force troops under Nato command have brought a halt to the fighting in Bosnia. Life in the country is beginning to resume a semblance of normality.

But the Dayton agreement aspires to build a lasting peace. Its civilian elements lay the ground for democratic elections, for repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, restoration of human rights and reconstruction of the country. There is, however, little evidence of progress on any of these fronts.

A grave obstacle to progress is the apparent inability of the war crimes tribunal to act decisively. It is common knowledge who has been indicted

and should be brought to justice: their names, photographs, even their addresses, are available on lists in Sarajevo and elsewhere.

By failing to bring indicted criminals to justice in advance of the forthcoming elections, the tribunal will, in effect, confer democratic respectability on these individuals and their political parties which have changed little since the outbreak of war.

The tribunal's mandate requires it to "contribute to the restoration and maintenance of peace". It would be unforgivable — and a tragic irony — if failure now on the part of Nato governments to support the tribunal in fulfilling its mandate served to reinforce the power bases of many of those who bear responsibility for the war — the very war which the Dayton peace agreement helped bring to an end.

Unless action is taken very soon, the \$1.2 billion pledged in Brussels will be spent on bolstering an ethnically cleansed, insecure and partitioned Bosnia.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS HINTON,
President and Chief Executive,
International Crisis Group,
3 Catherine Place, SW1,
April 15.

Drug traffic and future of Gibraltar

From the Ambassador of Spain

Sir, Your leading article today, "Rock solid", is entirely right at least on one point: Spain has consistently ignored the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht which stated that

... the town and castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, fortifications and forts thereto belonging ... be yielded to Great Britain without any territorial jurisdiction and without any open communication by land with the country round about.

Your reminder is particularly well timed now, when the Spanish authorities have to deal again with persistent drug-trafficking from the colony. Spain does not accept, as your leader alleges, that there have been "considerable advances" by the administration on the Rock in the fight against smuggling.

Since current licensing procedures for speedboats were introduced in July, 10.5 tonnes of hashish coming from Gibraltar vessels have been seized by Spanish customs officials. Over this period, 51 drug-smuggling runs from the colony have been reported. In 12 of these cases the smuggling operations were carried out by speedboats which were thought to have been confiscated.

Those who hailed the measures introduced in July last year as the solution for this problem were wrong. Boats still remain at the disposal of smugglers.

The conspiracy theory that Spain uses the excuse of drugs trafficking to put diplomatic pressure on Gibraltar cannot be revived each time Spain demands the full commitment of Britain to solving this serious problem. Drug smugglers should not be honoured with so significant a role in the preservation of the colony's current status.

Yours etc,
ALBERTO AZA,
Embassy of Spain,
24 Belgrave Square, SW1,
April 12.

Youth and the Church

From Mr William E. Bridge

Sir, Your excellent leading article of April 11, "The empty pew" [see also letters, April 17], diagnosed correctly the fundamental problem within the Church by its departure from the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible. The liturgy in the Alternative Service Book, with its numerous permutations, makes common prayer impossible and scripture readings almost a lucky dip.

No longer are children taught the creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, let alone in a common format. All are as relevant for today as they have always been.

It is time to call a halt to modern diversions for all bishops and priests to return to their fundamental duties of instructing with diligence those committed to their charge in Holy Scripture, to minister the doctrine and sacraments as God commanded and with which the Church has entrusted them.

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM E. BRIDGE,
175 Crofton Road, Orpington, Kent,
April 11.

From the Reverend Ronald Fraser Yule

Sir, We Scots, unlike the English, are not drawn to God by the "incompar-

able beauty of the King James Bible" but by the revelation of God as communicated through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This constant harping back to outdated language, which serves only as a crutch for yesterday's expressions of belief and doctrine, is the true barrier to any young or thinking person's search for meaningful religious faith.

Yours sincerely,
RONALD FRASER YULE,
15 Victoria Street,
Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire,
April 11.

From Mr Stephen Wood

Sir, Your leader recommends a return to the form and language of the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer in order to attract back lost worshippers and a new generation of young people.

Would *The Times* expect to remove all illustrations, replace news on the front page with classified advertising and return to hot-metal printing in order to attract more readers?

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN WOOD,
8 Medlar Close,
Bredgar,
Stirling, Stirling, Kent,
April 15.

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STEPHEN WOOD,
8 Medlar Close,
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Stirling, Stirling, Kent,
April 15.

Treasure hunters

From Mr Dennis Jordan

Sir, Treasure hunters may well have met with National Heritage officials (report, April 15) but the meeting I attended on that date was between officials of the Department of National Heritage and the National Council for Metal Detecting.

Undoubtedly, there are treasure hunters (a legitimate practice) within our membership; however, our meeting was the latest in a series of attempts to reconcile divergent interests concerning the protection of the heritage of England and Wales.

Sir Anthony Grant's treasure Bill, if

successful, will apply to all persons intentionally searching for, or casually finding, material designated as treasure.

Yours faithfully,
DENNIS JORDAN
(President, National Council for Metal Detecting),
3 Chapel Close,
Pulham Market, Norfolk,
April 17.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Seconds out for an opera duel

From Mr Antony Pristavec

Sir, I was interested to read the "correspondence" between your opera critic, Rodney Milnes, and Raymond Gubbay, the impresario (Arts, April 12), about how far promoters should go in attempting to produce "opera for the masses". I believe both have valid points to make; however, if I had to decide which to support, it would probably be my fellow arts manager.

Mr Gubbay rightly suggests that questions should be asked about the ludicrous situation in which the Royal Opera finds itself. How can the company justify the appalling waste of public money which we are witnessing in regard to its proposed closure of Covent Garden?

The company may point to the fact that the money allocated for the project development comes from the National Lottery and other non-Arts Council sources; but surely the whole existence of the Royal Opera is solely down to the taxpayer. Without this funding the company would simply not exist.

This, however, is not the case with Mr Gubbay's organisation. Receiving no public funding, he decided to take the risk of staging *La Bohème* at the Royal Albert Hall.

As an opera-lover, who has been attending performances for over thirty years, I went along to see for myself — having already heard and read the damning criticisms of Mr Milnes and his colleagues before the opening night. I was certainly not offended by what I saw or heard and was, in fact, approving of the result and very glad that the risk was taken.

No doubt the dialogue will continue. The public do not need critics to tell it what it should, or should not, see and hear. Audiences will make clear their opinions by coming back for more or by staying away. We need only wait until Mr Gubbay's next outing to the Royal Albert Hall for the answer. I have a suspicion that Mr Gubbay will win the day.

Yours sincerely,
ANTONY PRISTAVEC
(Director, Antony Pristavec,
Artist and Concert Management),
79 Norbury Crescent, SW16,
April 12.

From Sir John Burgh

Sir, Long may commercial and subsidised opera flourish and jointly encourage and nourish ever larger audiences for, to quote your leader "Duets and duels" (April 12), "the empress of arts, bringing music, drama and design together in one exquisite fusion". But they won't if huge sums are spent on promoting the same operas in the same places at the same time.

The National Opera Co-ordinating Committee, which I chair, tries hard to avoid this. It is composed of the subsidised companies and representatives of some concert-hall venues which stage opera.

We need Mr Raymond Gubbay to join hands with us to ensure that both commercial and subsidised opera will thrive and the public, our patrons, obtain the maximum enjoyment from a well planned repertoire covering the country.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BURGH
(President),
Trinity College, Oxford,
April 15.

Boos at the Garden

From Dr J. C. Green

Sir, Mr Nicholas Albery (letter, April 12) is quite wrong in thinking that all those who object to his brother's production of *Nabucco* at Covent Garden necessarily dislike anything new. This is certainly not the case.

What one takes exception to is the intrusion of the more bizarre excesses of the production team between the performers and the audience. The design and production should, after all, complement the performance. If, during some of the musically more moving and profound moments of the opera, the audience is reduced to laughter, as happened at the performance I attended, then I judge that production to have failed.

Yours faithfully,
J. C. GREEN,
15 Heddingham Gardens,
Plymouth, Devon,
April 12.

Bill of Rights

From Mr Paul Shephard

Sir, The idea of a Bill of Rights is not to protect people from government, but to protect individuals from the majority: whom the Government represents. Like J. A. Davis (letter, April 12) I prefer democracy; but I recognise that the majority is not always right.

Yours,
PAUL SHEPHERD,
22 York Rise, NWS,
April 13.

To suit all tastes

From Mr Nigel Cory

Sir, Presumably the plastic products to be made from potato starch (report, April 10) will include microchips.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL CORY,
31 The Crescent,
Maidenhead, Berkshire,
April 10.

NEWS

Israel says attacks will go on

■ Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, made clear that Operation Grapes of Wrath, the bombardment of Lebanon, would continue despite the killing of nearly 100 Lebanese civilians sheltering in a United Nations base near Tyre.

The Israeli Government said Katyusha rocket-launchers had been fired from an area within 300 yards of the compound of the UN Fijian battalion and blamed Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government for the incident. Pages 1, 13

Labour poised to curb child benefit

■ Labour is poised to scrap child benefit for a million youngsters aged between 16 and 18 and transfer the £700m it costs into improving education and training for poorer families. The proposal will be signalled in Edinburgh today by Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor. Pages 1, 2, 20, 21

Jensen apology

Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, has written to the parents of Louise Jensen expressing the Army's shame at her killing by three drunken British soldiers in Cyprus. Pages 1, 21

Asylum-seekers hit

Asylum-seekers were told in the High Court that they cannot claim council housing while waiting to hear about refugee status. The judge said he made his ruling reluctantly. Page 2

Racist stabbing

A black teenage student was stabbed to death at a bus stop in southeast London by a gang of white youths simply because of the colour of his skin, an Old Bailey jury was told. Page 3

Death row vigil

The mother and sister of John Scurry, who murdered tourists for credit cards and cash, waited outside a Singapore jail as he was due to be hanged. Page 5

Dissident can stay

Muhammad Al-Masari, the Saudi Islamic dissident ordered out of Britain, was told that he could stay after all for at least four years. Page 6

Fishermen's fury

More than 2,000 angry trawlermen invaded London, some arriving by boat, to demand withdrawal from the EU's common fisheries policy. Page 7

Dummy-suckers grow up into dummies

■ Babies given dummies grow up to be dumber than average. Researchers found that the use of dummies was the strongest factor linked to a child's intelligence. They may make children less receptive to outside stimuli and less able to interact with their parents; or it may simply be that they are used by less intelligent parents. Page 1

Rattling the rich

When the IRA bombed 22 The Boltons, South Kensington, the terrorists rattled the windows of some of London's richest and most famous. Properties there have fetched £9 million. Page 9

Triumph of hope

More than 2,000 works were expected on the first day for submissions to the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Last year only 1,100 of the 12,000 entries were successful. Page 11

Nuclear control plan

The Kremlin is to propose co-operation between intelligence agencies to halt the threat of nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. Pages 14, 21

Fears for Jemima

Imran Khan is planning to hire an armed bodyguard for his wife, Jemima. She has hardly left her home in Lahore since the bomb attack on his hospital. Page 15

Oklahoma memorial

A year after the Oklahoma bombing in which 168 people died, the family of Baylee Almon marked in private the day she would have been two. Pages 16, 21

Officers to be shot

A group of Chinese army officers has been sentenced to be shot for "counter-revolutionary crimes" and stockpiling weapons, Western sources confirmed. Page 17



Graham Gooch, right, elected as an England cricket selector, with Nasser Hussain, England A captain, at Chelmsford. Page 48

BUSINESS

Economy: Inflation remained unchanged last month but a surge in Government borrowing led to an overshoot of the Chancellor's budget deficit forecast. Page 25

Telecoms: The stockmarket believes British Telecom and Cable & Wireless are close to announcing merger terms. Page 25

Body Shop: The first wholly independent social audit of a leading British company makes serious criticisms of the company that commissioned it. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index rose 5.1 points to close at 3820.7. Sterling's trade-weighted index remained unchanged at 83.6 after a fall from \$1.5085 to \$1.5080 but a rise from DM2.2738 to DM2.2793. Page 28

SPORT

Cricket: David Graveney and Graham Gooch were elected to the England selection panel ahead of Ian Botham and the other five candidates. Page 48

Golf: Nick Faldo had an opening-round 70 in the MCI Classic at Hilton Head Island, his first appearance since winning the Masters at Augusta. Page 48

Football: Steve Bruce still has a chance of playing in the Cup Final despite limping out of Manchester United's match against Leeds with a hamstring injury. Page 44

Rugby union: The Rugby Football Union should consider modifying its grandiloquent name and view the world from a less self-admiringly exalted position, Gerald Davies writes. Page 43

ARTS

Royal theatres: Peter Whelan takes a staunchly republican view of the Royal Family four years on in his new play for the Birmingham Rep. *Divine Right*, which opens tonight. Page 37

Brilliant Baroque: Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert achieve a near-perfect reading of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* on the South Bank. Page 37

Pop on Friday: A bleak and difficult new album from Tricky, plus Mark Morrison's hugely confident debut and Hootie & the Blowfish deliver another dose of easy-going rock. Page 38

Castlin Moran writes: It worked in America. So now they're bringing the Rock the Vote campaign to Britain. About time, too. Page 39

Valerie Grove interviews: Genista McIntosh, who will oversee the massive spending programme announced this week to improve the National Theatre. Page 19

Murder mystery: Who killed Janet Brown? A year ago the mother of three was found bludgeoned to death in her home; the police are still mystified as to a motive, but the villagers have their own theories. Page 18

Getting results: Gillian Shephard claims full marks for Conservative education policies, but a study out this week says their reforms have failed. The great standards debate. Page 40

Business on the move: Relocating industry points to Britain's economic regeneration. Pages 33-35

THE PAPERS
It is urgent to reach an agreement to guarantee the security of the civilian populations of Israel and Lebanon which at the same time will respect the sovereignty of the country of the cedar. — *Le Monde*

Israel would do well to remember that its sworn enemy is not all of Lebanon but the fanatics of Hezbollah. Military measures should be directed at that specific enemy. — *Los Angeles Times*

William Emerson, film historian and collector; Hugh Begg, publishing executive; Professor Peter Ekelstein, Professor of Reproductive Endocrinology at Birmingham University; His Honour Roger Willis, Circuit Judge. Page 23

Nicholas Soames on Army's regret for Cyprus killing; Bosnia; opera; Gibraltar; Eick-endowment; Youth and the Church. Page 21

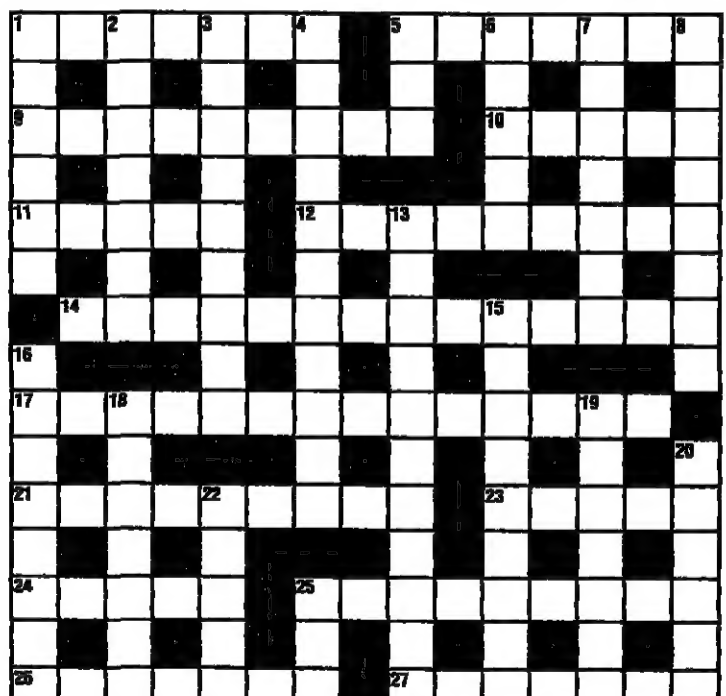
TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

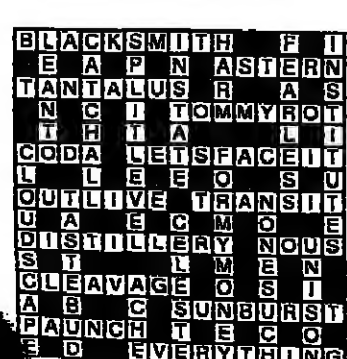
■ **FAST WORK**
Win a trip to the Le Mans 24-hour Endurance Race, in Car 96

■ **PLUS...**
The Magazine, Weekend, 1015 for young readers, Weekend Money and Vision, the 7-day TV and radio guide

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,146



- ACROSS**
- Disorderly male with case in Jumbo? Never! (7).
 - Go back to find right exit (7).
 - Showing cheek, being clean-shaven (4-5).
 - A sort of honour king gives Winsor's heroine (5).
 - I'll be found in one spot - that's natural (5).
 - Minor characters unheard in High Court? (5,4).
 - Plant producing lighting for Shanghai, say (7,7).
 - It began to rain hard, being blustery as well (4,3,7).
 - Composed without any frills? (9).
 - Soldiers put back in first cavalry unit (5).
 - Copy a king, being upright (5).
- DOWN**
- It takes a pound to secure rises, though (6).
 - Choir involved with NW cathedral city (7).
 - Fast-moving English river within catchment area (6,3).
 - Small boat makes sea creatures dive (6-5).
 - Rose after 10 (3).
 - White of egg has a hard look, they say (5).
 - Hold me up, provide support (7).
 - Vagrant gets near Troy, perhaps (8).
 - I'll accept that fine after spring, too (4,3,4).
 - Evening paper taken up by almost everyone (9).
 - Put on spur, but not the second (8).
 - Soldiers trapped by river in flood (7).
 - I call round towards evening (7).
 - This was instrumental in splitting leaders of Spanish and French (6).
 - Tree sheltering a king, a devout man (5).
 - China cup, a Limoges piece (3).



- BLACKSMITH**
- 1 Across
 - 2 Across
 - 3 Across
 - 4 Across
 - 5 Across
 - 6 Across
 - 7 Across
 - 8 Across
 - 9 Across
 - 10 Across

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Bedfordshire/Essex	706
North/Suffolk/Cambs	707
West Midlands	708
West Midlands & Shropshire	709
Shropshire/Worcestershire	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincoln & Humberside	713
Yorkshire & Cleveland	714
North Yorkshire	715
North East	716
North East & Wales	717
North Wales	718
North Wales & Shropshire	719
North Wales & Shropshire	720
North Wales & Shropshire	721
North Wales & Shropshire	722
North Wales & Shropshire	723
North Wales & Shropshire	724
North Wales & Shropshire	725
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North Wales & Shropshire	727

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For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code:

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London & M25	739
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AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (excl. VAT) and 49p per minute at all other times.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Loughborough, 16°C (61°F); lowest day temp: Loughborough, 10°C (50°F); highest night temp: Loughborough, 10°C (50°F); lowest night temp: Loughborough, 4°C (39°F).

FORECAST

■ **General:** southern parts of England and Wales will be rather cloudy. Though there may be some brighter breaks, there will also be outbreaks of mainly light rain from time to time. It will be mild, but with a moderate breeze.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will have sunny intervals and showers, heaviest and most frequent in the west. Many eastern regions will stay dry. There will be a moderate to fresh south to southwesterly breeze.

■ **London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands, Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales:** rather cloudy, some brighter breaks but also some spots of rain. Wind southwesterly, moderate to fresh. Max 16C (61F).

AROUND-BRITAIN-YESTERDAY

Area	Sun	Rain	Max	Min
Aberdeen	1.0	0.0	12	5
Anglophilly	2.8	0.0	10	5
Cardiff	1.1	0.0	12	5
Exeter	0.0	0.0	11	5
London	0.0	0.0	11	5
Manchester	0.0	0.0	11	5
Nottingham	0.0	0.0	11	5
Sheffield	0.0	0.0	11	5
Southampton	0.0	0.0	11	5
Stirling	0.0	0.0	11	5
Swansea	0.0	0.0	11	5
Torquay	0.0	0.0	11	5
Weymouth	0.0	0.0	11	5

ABROAD

Area	Sun	Rain	Max	Min
Alexandria	17	63	20	10
Amman	20	68	23	13
Algiers	20	68	23	13
Antwerp	17	63	20	10
Athens	17	63	20	10
Bahia	17	63	20	10
Bangkok	17	63	20	10
Barcelona	17	63	20	10
Bombay	17	63	20	10
Buenos Aires	17	63	20	10
Calcutta	17	63	20	10
Cairo	17	63	20	10
Cardiff	17	63	20	10
Chennai	17	63	20	10
Cebu	17	63	20	10
Dhaka	17	63	20	10
Dubai	17	63	20	10
Edinburgh	17	63	20	10
Hong Kong	17	63	20	10
London	17	63	20	10
Los Angeles	17	63	20	10
Madrid	17	63	20	10
Manila	17	63	20	10
Mexico City	17	63	20	10
Moscow	17	63	20	10
Mumbai	17	63	20	10
New Delhi	17	63	20	10
Paris	17	63	20	10
Rangoon	17	63	20	10
San Francisco	17	63	20	10
Seoul	17	63	20	10
Singapore	17	63	20	10
Sydney	17	63	20	10
Taipei	17	63	20	10
Tokyo	17	63	20	10
Ulaanbaatar	17	63	20	10
Yokohama	17	63	20	10

FORECAST

■ **E England, N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, Central N:** sunny intervals and generally dry. Wind southwesterly, moderate. Max 14C (57F).

■ **NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth:** sunny spells and generally dry conditions. Wind southwesterly, moderate. Max 13C (55F).

■ **SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland, N Ireland:** sunny intervals and showers, some quite heavy. Wind southwesterly fresh. Max 12C (54F).

■ **Outlook:** warm, thundery air will spread from the south over the weekend.

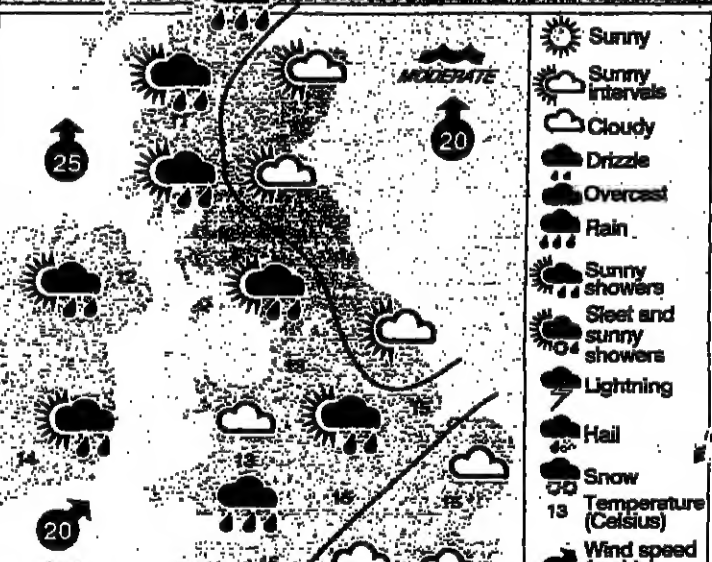
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New Delhi	17	63	20	10
Paris	17	63	20	10
Rangoon	17	63	20	10
San Francisco	17	63	20	10
Seoul	17	63	20	10
Singapore	17	63	20	10
Sydney	17	63	20	10
Taipei	17	63	20	10
Tokyo	17	63	20	10
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